

THE INDEPENDENT



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man of the movies

TODAY'S NEWS

Artificial skin on sale

Laboratory-grown human skin which is already on sale heralds the start of a new era in transplant surgery, with a variety of artificially grown body parts, including heart muscles, coming on to the market. "This is not science fiction," said one of the inventors responsible. Page 13

Tory wit and wisdom

The attempt by the new Tory leader William Hague to present his party as a forward-looking, intellectually invigorated force wasn't greatly helped by two older Tories yesterday. Lord Tebbit attacked multiculturalism as divisive and suggested immigrant families had to be loyal to one culture only, or "they will forever be foreigners holding British passports and this kingdom will become a Yugoslavia". Not to be outdone, Alan Clark MP, who has been presenting a television history of the Tory Party, suggested all members of the IRA should be lined up against a wall and shot. Mr Hague, who visited the Notting Hill carnival as one of his first acts as leader, later rebuked Lord Tebbit by saying he wanted a multicultural party. Page 4

Pensions above £100

The state married couple's pension is to rise above £100 a week for the first time. The reason? Simply that September's inflation rate of 3.6 per cent is used to upgrade many benefits. The change will happen from April. Home-owners, though, have little reason to cheer: the Bank of England is likely to raise interest rates again before long to keep underlying inflation on course for the Government's target. Page 24

Kids' cartoon threat

Imported American cartoons, delivered in huge quantities through satellite and cable television, are changing British childhood tastes, according to a conference held in London yesterday. They are now the dominant type of children's programme on television, squeezing out traditional dramas and factual programmes, the Broadcasting Standards Commission told a meeting of the lobby group Voice of the Listener and Viewer. Page 3

Irish minister goes

Ray Burke, the Irish foreign minister and co-sponsor of the Northern Ireland talks, was yesterday forced to resign, just as they reached a crucial stage. He had been under siege for weeks after admitting taking £30,000 in cash in 1989 when a business associate was seeking planning permissions in Dublin. Page 8

SEEN & HEARD

Do you look like a human haystack and have some spare time? West Midlands Police are appealing for men who look like members of American rock group ZZ Top to take part in an identity parade. They said volunteers should have long beards, preferably hanging down to their waists, and ponytails. A police spokeswoman said: "Apparently the volunteers are to be likened to band members of ZZ Top who I understand look like this." Expenses will be paid and anyone interested should contact Birmingham's Bridge Street West ID Suite.

Wednesday 8 October 1997 (IR50p) 45p No 3,422

A paparazzi ban? That'll save us money, sneers Rupert Murdoch



Rupert Murdoch yesterday declared that the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, would save his world-wide media operation a lot of money because his papers would no longer have to pay exorbitant fees for photographs taken by paparazzi. He was dismissive when asked if he regretted buying intrusive pictures of Diana for his papers. "Oh, I think news-

papers paid far too much for them," he replied. "We'll have a major cost saving if we can get rid of this crew." Speaking at the annual meeting of his parent group News Corporation in Adelaide, he went on to dissociate himself from the accusations of Earl Spencer, Diana's brother, that newspapers like his had hounded Diana to her death. "There were un-

doubtedly... I don't want to throw stones in glass houses, but I would certainly say that we were by no means the worst offenders and that Princess Diana, whom we all had the greatest respect for, generally worked with the photographers to her satisfaction." He called on those who argued that the solution was tougher privacy laws to be careful. "When

we get into this talk of privacy laws, it's to see if we can get a new privilege for the already privileged," he said. "It should be resisted. I think, by all journalists and all people involved in publishing and television. Privacy laws are for the protection of people who are already privileged." TV lobby, page 24

Photograph: Matt Turner/Reuters

CJD could be spread by blood transfusions

Could blood transfusions accelerate the spread of CJD in the human population? And if, as some scientists fear, they could, our Environment Correspondent asks what could be done to minimise the risk

Some senior scientists fear that there is a real possibility that the new variant of the lethal brain affliction Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD) caused by mad cow disease could pass through the population via blood transfusions.

The Government must urgently consider removing white blood cells, a potential source of infectivity, from donated blood, they say. But that would add at least £50m to the costs of blood transfusions.

The Government says the risks of infection is "negligible" but unknown. Research is being commissioned to try to pin it down. "If you don't have proof, then you have to say there is a possibility," the Department of Health said yesterday.

The scientists' fears emerged at a conference this week organised by one of Britain's research councils. It was held under "Chatham House" rules, which mean that those attending - including *The Independent* - cannot disclose the identity of speakers or give details of the meeting.

"The processes we are going through today, such as blood transfusion, could amplify a disaster lurking behind the scenes," said a genetics professor. "One could make the argument that removing white blood cells [from donated blood] should be done in anticipation."

The conference was held as the Department of Health revealed plans to keep track, in secret, of all those who have re-

ceived blood from four donors who later became ill with new variant CJD (v-CJD), the human version of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE). The department said the recipients of the blood would not be told because it did not want to cause an unnecessary panic. There have been 21 victims of v-CJD, and only one is still alive.

Scientists are worried because, in experiments in which mice have been infected with BSE, it has been shown that the agent which carries the infection becomes established first of all in glands which make and harbour white blood cells, such as the spleen and lymph nodes. Furthermore, the amount of infectivity in these glands builds up at time passes. Lat-

v-CJD came on the scene. So far, studies have not found a single instance when a blood transfusion passed the infection on.

But these findings provide no absolute guarantee of safety. First, v-CJD has some different properties from classic CJD, which may alter its infectivity. Second, there is the sheer scale of blood transfusions, and the fact that an unknown number of perfectly healthy looking people are incubating v-CJD. There is no way of preventing them from donating blood, because there is no test which shows whether the agent is in people in the early stages of the disease, or when they are incubating it.

Concerned scientists point to parallels with the opening years of the Aids pandemic in the early Eighties. At the time, there was no blood test which could demonstrate the presence of the HIV virus in blood. The authorities said the risk to haemophiliacs from stopping transfusions of the clotting agent Factor VIII far outweighed the risk of contracting Aids. Yet, subsequently, thousands of haemophiliacs were killed by Aids due to them receiving contaminated Factor VIII.

The Government avoids outright claims that transfusions are completely safe. Chief Medical Officer Sir Kenneth Calman said: "Any negligible risk of new variant CJD transmission is heavily outweighed by the immediate benefit [of blood transfusions]. For many, that will mean saving their life."

There are 2.5 million blood donations a year and about 800,000 patients receive transfusions. The blood is separated into red blood cells, platelets (which help blood to clot), and plasma. Plasma is mixed with plasma from other donors and products derived from the plasma of one donor can be transfused into many patients.

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COLUMN ONE

Ballet Blitz as Cinderella wages war on convention



Cinderella did go to the ball — on a motorbike; the *corps de ballet* didn't wear tutus, but they did wear gas masks.

There have been many claims to be the new "new rock'n'roll" — comedy, cinema, even occasionally rock'n'roll. But now there is the most surprising contender of all: ballet. Last night at London's Piccadilly Theatre the radically innovative company Adventures In Motion Pictures (AMP) staged *Cinderella*. There was *Cinderella* the ballet (excellent); *Cinderella* the T-shirt (price: a little more than a glass slipper); and *Cinderella* the £70,000 themed first night party in Forties fashions at the Savoy (Prokofiev drink your heart out).

The contemporary dance troupe was led for this production by Royal Ballet stars present and past — the ethereal Sarah Wildor, dashing young icon Adam Cooper, and legendary matron icon Lynn Seymour. The story was set in the Blitz, with Cinders falling for a wounded RAF pilot.

The show was splattered with spectacle and, special effects and dazzling choreography from AMP's Matthew Bourne. The result: £1m advance bookings at the box office, a young audience, merchandising a plenty and a full West End theatre.

For the present stars of the Royal Ballet watching from the stalls, there was a slightly bitter irony. They can see that for the best dancers, the audience-grabbing AMP (which featured all male swans and plenty of leather in Swan Lake last year) knows it will get the best by recruiting from the Royal Ballet.

But while their former colleagues played to a packed house last night, the Royal Ballet is currently losing the battle to fill the auditorium over at Hammersmith thanks to crassly misjudged management decisions by the Royal Opera House on where the company's temporary home should be, and choosing one lacking any claim to grandeur.

Perhaps, though, there is more to it than location. AMP has lessons for both contemporary dance (it always ensures there is a narrative to its works to help the audience) and classical ballet. Bourne is very much director as well as choreographer, whereas the role of director is curiously lacking in so much ballet.

While he never messes with the music or the essence of a classical story, he insists on drama — last night's ballet being set in the Blitz with its effects on the characters — and humour, such as *Cinderella* fantasising about her dream bomber pilot prince, and the real thing is too timid to give her a kiss.

And then there is the marketing. Katharine Doré who co-runs AMP has concentrated her marketing on a database of theatre- and cinema-goers and not the traditional ballet audience.

"There are so many people who don't consider going to ballet," she says. "They think it will be over their heads. But our work is so visual and we bring in an audience who go to cinema. There's been an immense sea change in what audiences want over the last couple of years. Audiences want to be challenged but the work has to be delivered in an accessible way."

AMP achieved that double objective last night, and the country's great classical companies will look at their box office figures and may now decide to mix more of the challenging and accessible with the time-honoured and traditional.

— David Lister, Arts News Editor

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TOURIST RATES

Australia (dollars)	2.15	Italy (lira)	2707
Austria (schillings)	19.36	Japan (yen)	194.70
Belgium (francs)	56.93	Malta (lira)	0.60
Canada (\$)	2.16	Netherlands (guilder)	3.09
Cyprus (pounds)	0.81	Norway (krone)	11.10
Denmark (kroner)	10.55	Portugal (escudos)	279.19
France (francs)	9.25	Spain (pesetas)	232.06
Germany (marks)	2.76	Sweden (kroner)	11.86
Greece (drachmae)	438.74	Switzerland (francs)	2.28
Hong Kong (\$)	12.12	Turkey (lira)	2707
Ireland (pounds)	1.07	USA (\$)	1.57

Source: Thomas Cook
Rates for education purposes only

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It's what you want to know

PEOPLE



Down to earth: Michael Foale with his children Jenna and Ian

Father and child reunion for Mir astronaut

British-born astronaut Michael Foale tucked into a pizza he had ordered from outer space — "everything on it, but hold the anchovies" — early yesterday after landing safely at Cape Canaveral, Florida, on the shuttle *Atlantis* from a 145-day space odyssey.

Watched by his wife Rhonda and grabbing his daughter Jenna, 7, and son Ian, 3, for both hugs and balance, he said he planned to spend his first day back getting his "earth legs" after the gravity-free environment on board the Russian space station *Mir*. "His legs feel like weights. It's very hard putting one foot in front of the other," his mother Mary said from his parents' home in Cambridge.

Who delivered the 40-year-old astrophysicist's pizza was not immediately known, but back in Britain, Pizza Hut marketeers were quick to spot the potential and offered him £20,000 to advertise their product. "We feel he has star quality," a Pizza Hut spokesman said, adding with no hint of irony: "The sky's the limit for Michael."

No hint of irony either from his father, 67-year-old Air Commodore Colin Foale, who said the whole family was "over the moon". "He joins a hall of heroes now. I have been told NASA believes he was

the right man in the right place for this particular mission," Air Commodore Foale added.

The astronaut may have been born in Britain but he looked as American as the chocolate chip cookies he had wolfed down as post-pizza dessert when he appeared before reporters in a stars-and-stripes baseball cap yesterday. "I am very glad to be holding these children," he said. "Ian has grown to twice his size. You've become a rebel," he added, grinning at his sleepy son. "Jenna has become a little lady," he said. When his daughter squealed with delight, he added: "sometimes".

"I feel not particularly heavy, but a little uncertain in terms of walking and balance. I miss the breeze. I want to get strong enough to be able to go outside and walk. That's going to be my goal for the next day."

Foale was visibly upset when asked in a television interview about the Mir's collision in July with a re-supply craft, widely blamed on the Mir's then commander, Vasili Tsibliev. "He felt responsible for the whole accident," Foale said, "which I don't quite feel." Shaking his head and looking down, he added: "No, this is too hard to talk about."

— Phil Davison, Miami

Bill Gates backs Blair's computer crusade

Bill Gates, the multi-billionaire head of Microsoft, yesterday promised the Prime Minister advice and involvement but no money as the Government's crusade to connect every pupil to the Internet.

Tony Blair announced £100m to update school computers and software as he launched the national grid for learning. The aim is to connect all 32,000 British schools to the grid, which will be like a giant website, by 2002. At present only 6,000 have access to the Internet.

The grid will offer teachers lesson materials, advice on planning and educational software. Eventually, pupils may be able to access worldwide information for their history homework and to take part in science experiments involving space technology which would be impossible in the classroom.

However, Mr Gates (pictured above) denied that Microsoft's participation in the National Teaching Grid was aimed at inculcating a new generation of British computer users in his company's software. "People will make their buying decisions independent of what's there," he said before the lecture to Cam-

bridge undergraduates.

"A particular word-processing package doesn't tell you what to write or how to write. There are authors who use word processors and there are authors who use pen and paper, and that's fine." Ministers are currently examining ways in which schools will be able to prevent pupils using the new computers to look at unsuitable material such as pornography. Ways of blocking such material already exist, officials said.

Though private companies will

supply software for the grid, the Government will ensure that the quality is controlled.

Mr Blair, who visited a computer class at Holland Park comprehensive school in west London, told pupils he had been talking to "the guy who runs Microsoft" and had discussed how all libraries could be wired to the Internet.

He said: "If we want the best educated and skilled workforce then we have to use the new technology ..."

"We are engaged with a whole series of people. Not just people like Bill Gates but our own communities in this country."

Teachers fear that more information technology will distract from literacy, and in Brighton the Princess Royal told the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference of top public schools that there was more to education to computers. "Information technology is not the answer to education in the sense of people understanding basic skills."

Though computers allowed children to acquire unprecedented amounts of information, only teachers could turn that information into knowledge by showing its relevance to their lives.

— Judith Judd, Education Editor

7.30 FOR 8



UPDATE

TRAVEL

Airlines suffering more flight delays

Airlines have threatened to take the Civil Aviation Authority, the industry regulator, to court over the publication of punctuality statistics, officials said yesterday.

"We have to check all the details extremely carefully," Stan Abrahams, chief statistician at the CAA, said. "Some carriers have told us they will seek legal redress if we publish. Which is why when we do, the figures are right."

Fewer than half (49 per cent) of holiday flights in and out of the UK's 10 major airports were on time in the April to June 1997 period, the CAA revealed — a worse performance than the 52 per cent on-time figure for April to June 1996. And with the number of flights constantly increasing, the situation is unlikely to improve. "Delays will increase, and with charters, once a flight gets delayed, it's very difficult for that plane to get back on time again," said Mr Abrahams. Scheduled service flights were also suffering. Nearly 75 per cent were on time during this period compared with 80 per cent in the three months from April 1996. At Gatwick, the UK's busiest holiday airport, only 42 per cent of total charter flights and only 40 per cent of European charters were on time.

— Rondeep Ramesh, Transport Correspondent

MOTORING

Tailgating drivers top 'hate-list'



Drivers getting too close to the car in front are most likely to make motorists angry, according to a survey released yesterday. They also strongly objected to seeing other drivers using mobile phones while they are driving.

The survey, from breakdown company Autonomical Rescue, based on a sample of 1,000 people, showed that 66 per cent of motorists dislike "tailgating" — when the motorist behind drives too close — and a further 57 per cent were angered by drivers who used mobile phones while on the move. Other pet hates included: motorists who drove with their fog lights on when they were not needed (39 per cent); loud music being played with windows wide open (38 per cent); and motorists who always drove in the middle lane of a motorway (36 per cent).

"What is encouraging is that two of the most dangerous driving techniques — tailgating and mobile phone use — are at the very head of our survey," said Autonomical Rescue marketing manager Ronan Hart. "Certainly, many accidents would be avoided on Britain's busy roads if motorists stopped taking unnecessary risks."

SHOPPING

Safeway scores in wine department

Safeway has named Supermarket Wine Retailer of the year in a new guide for buyers.

The *Which? Wine Guide* praises the supermarket's range of 400 wines and its Eastern European selection in particular. "Safeway's combination of innovation and enthusiasm shines through even at a time when the range is nearly all of Britain's supermarkets is better than it has been for many years," the guide says. Wine Merchant of the Year is Oddbins, for the fourth year running; the guide says it "continues to find inspiration" setting it above the rest. Mail-order wine services also get the thumbs-up for offering good quality wines and some interesting bottles.

However, despite signs that Britons are becoming more adventurous in their choices, the guide says we are still too stingy when it comes to price. On average, drinkers in Britain spend £2.60 on a bottle of wine, akin to buying a "second-hand Ford Sierra" when you could have a luxury model car.

PRISONS

Jail regime condemned as appalling

Mentally ill inmates are being locked in their cells for up to 19 hours a day in "disgraceful" conditions at a jail visited by Sir David Ramsbotham, the chief inspector of prisons.

The health-care centre at Parkhurst prison, the scene of a break out in 1995 when three lifers escaped from the jail on the Isle of Wight, was severely criticised in the report published yesterday. Sir David said: "The regime for patients, particularly those with mental health disorders, is not only unacceptable it is punitive and more akin to that found in segregation units. This regime must cease immediately." He added that he was amazed the Prison Service had allowed such an "appalling regime" to continue at the secure category B jail because they had been criticised as long ago as 1994.

— Jason Bennett, Crime Correspondent



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It's what you want to know

Nanny is portrayed as a pitiless killer

Louise Woodward
listened tremulously to a tape-recording of the emergency call she made when baby Matthew Eappen went into convulsions. David Usborne was in court in Boston on the first day of her trial on first degree murder charges.

The 19-year-old British nanny facing first degree murder charges in Boston in the death last February of the baby boy in her charge, Matthew Eappen, was portrayed by prosecutors yesterday as a pitiless killer who had inflicted injuries on the child that were "extremely atrocious and cruel".

In vivid opening statements, assistant district attorney Gerry Leone repeatedly told jurors that the eight-month-old child had become incapacitated and

died days later in hospital because of "injuries caused by violent slamming against a hard surface."

Previving a case for the prosecution, which will describe a young nanny at the end of her tether with a child who would not settle, Mr Leone said that the injury had been inflicted in the bathroom of the family home. Matthew's parents, Deborah and Sunil Eappen, are both doctors. The "slamming" of the child's head, he said, was an

"action that anyone would know would cause a little eight-month-old boy to die."

A tape-recording of Louise, apparently in a state of panic, ringing the emergency services was entered as a first exhibit by the prosecution. Pleading for assistance, she was heard to say: "Help ... he's making gurgling noises ... help, what should I do? ... I think he puked. His face is going violet ... Oh, my God."

For the defence, Andrew Good said he would demand

strafe over the course of the trial, that may last three weeks, that Matthew in fact died from injuries that had been sustained, but not detected, in days prior to the day in question.

"When they say what happened, they will not be able to prove it happened," Mr Good said.

Also on the defence bench was Barry Scheck, one of America's best-known lawyers, who made headlines as part of OJ Simpson's so-called "dream team" of defenders.

If they fail to avert a guilty sentence for Miss Woodward, she could face a sentence of life imprisonment without parole.

Countering an assertion by the prosecution that Matthew had suffered injuries commensurate with falling onto his head from a first floor window, Mr Good said this would be shown to have been impossible. Such a trauma, he said, would surely have left the head "smashed and destroyed", whereas on his admission to

hospital Mathew showed no external signs of injury, "not a mark on him".

The defence will argue that an earlier injury caused a slow leaking of blood vessels in Matthew's head that eventually created the pressure that led to his death. To support their case, the defence will present several medical experts and will also attempt to show that Mathew had a fractured wrist, also apparently sustained several days before 4 February.

So many cartoons on TV it's not funny

British children are watching so many American cartoons some think 911 is the number for our emergency services. Paul McCann, Media Correspondent, looks at the threats to children's television that some think could damage our culture.

Imported American cartoons, the growth in satellite and cable television, changing childhood tastes and cost-cutting at the BBC and ITV are threatening the quality of children's television according to an industry conference held in London yesterday.

Cartoons are now the dominant type of children's programme on television, squeezing out traditional dramas and factual programmes. The Broadcasting Standards Commission revealed to a meeting of the lobby group Voice of the Listener and Viewer.

Animation now accounts for one-third of all children's programmes, compared with 25 per cent five years ago and just 10 per cent in 1981.

The conference was told by Michael Forte, Carlton Television's head of children's programmes, that the increase in animation is due to the "blanket bombing" of British television by American broadcasters with massive libraries of cartoons.

"It is the broadcasting equivalent of plutonium dumping," he said.

Mr Forte called on Chris Smith, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, to help "ring-fence" budgets for more diverse children's programmes like drama and factual shows.

Anna Home, the highly respected outgoing head of children's television at the BBC, echoed his concern. She admitted that the money is no longer available to make dramas like the classic Seventies series *Moondial* unless joint funding can be found from overseas broadcasters.

"High quality drama is under pressure because it is so expensive," she said. "Drama allows you to make fantasy, but thanks to Spielberg you have to invest huge amounts to make special effects."

Ms Home is also concerned that joint-funding by overseas programmes will mean Britain stops making indigenous dramas relevant to our culture.

Dan Maddicott, director of children's programmes for ITV company United News & Media, revealed that five of ITV's recent major children's dramas had been made with overseas funding, including the quintessentially British *Famous Five*, which would not have been made if Enid Blyton was not popular with German children.

Jocelyn Hay, chairman of the Voice of the Listener and Viewer, underlined the threat to Britain's culture by recalling a visit to the Labour MP Diane Abbott made to a school in the London area where children could recall 911, the American emergency services number, but did not know about 999.

While the BBC children's programming budget has fallen and ITV's has stood still over the last five years, six channels dedicated to children have launched on cable and satellite television.

The latest research by the Independent Television Commission shows that while 24 per cent of all homes have cable or satellite television, 39 per cent of those homes with children are connected.

In those homes 51 per cent of viewing would now be to channels like Nickelodeon, the Cartoon network or Fox Kids which all rely heavily on imported American programmes and cartoons.

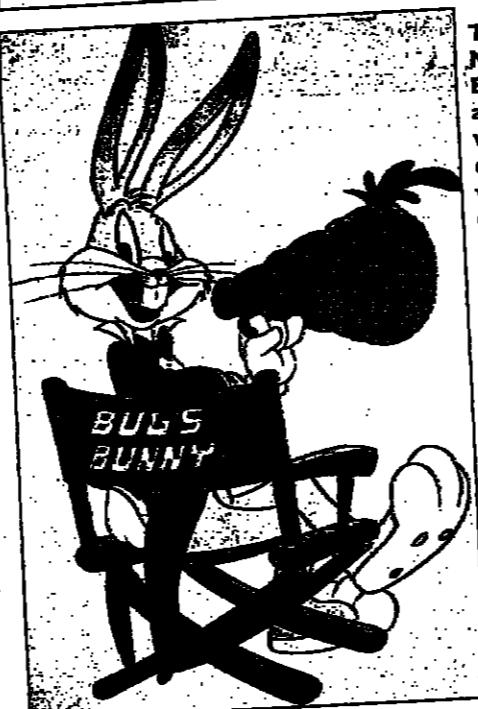
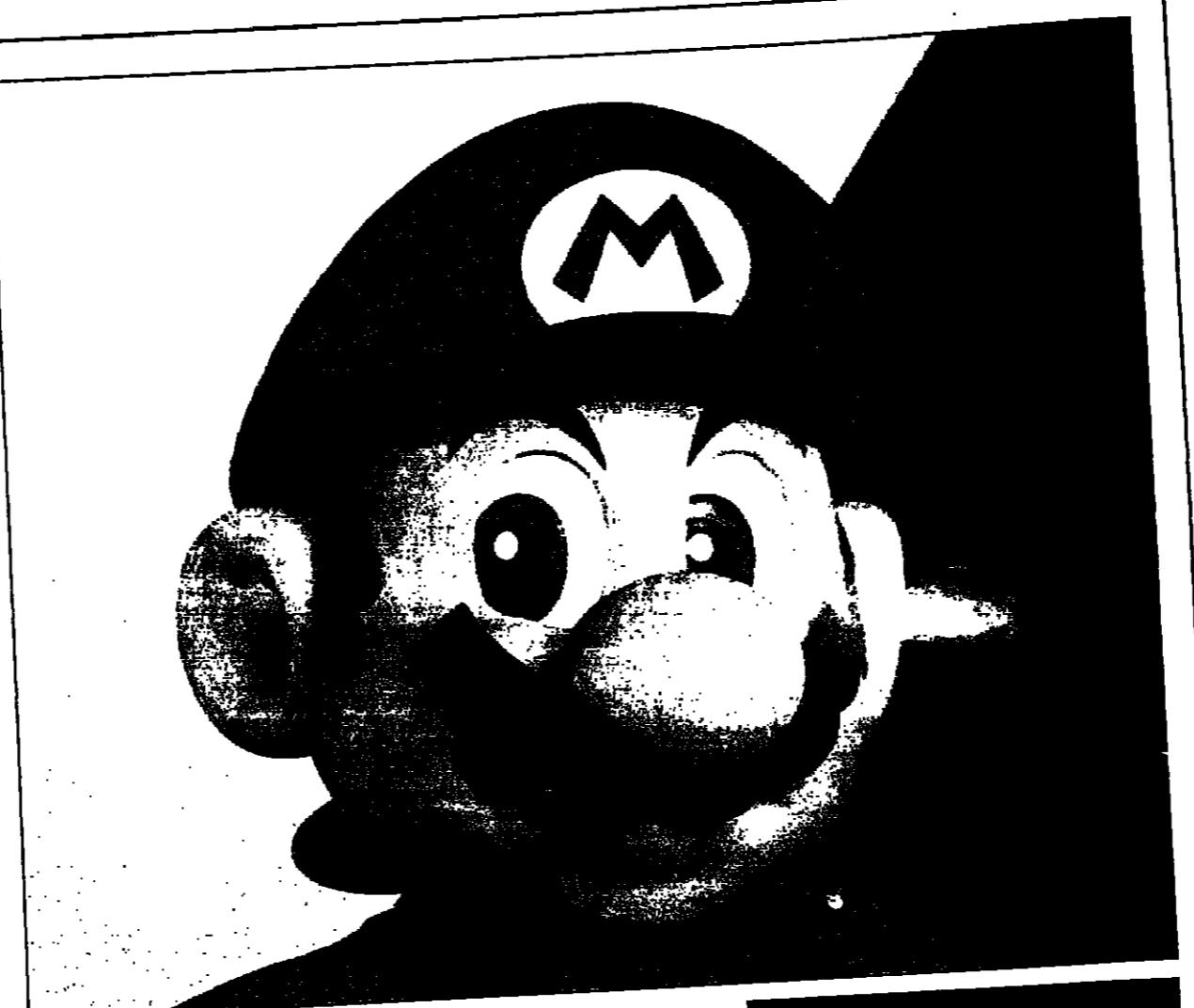
Such is the competition for young viewers that even acquired cartoons are increasing in price and threatening the future of some of the channels.

Adding to the threat to the traditional BBC and ITV after-school children's slot watched by generations of British children is the fact that children now prefer to watch programmes such as soap operas which are made for adults.

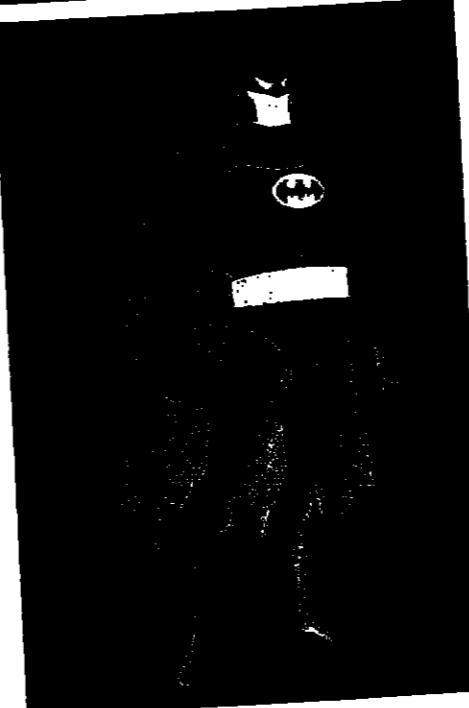
So far this year the top five rating programmes for children have all been adult programmes - the film *Addams Family Values*, *EastEnders*, *Neighbours*, *Casualty* and *Gladiators*.

Anna Home said: "A controller of the BBC or ITV could look at that children's block and think 'I could do so much more with a soap in there'."

• The actor David Jason underlined his domination of popular television at the National Television Awards last night, winning Most Popular Actor, Most Popular Comedy Performer and Most Popular Comedy Programme for the *Only Fools and Horses* Christmas special. The awards are voted for by television viewers.



That's not all folks: Super Mario (above), Bugs Bunny (left) and Batman are part of the continuing wave of American cartoon programmes which critics say is destroying British culture



IN THE INDEPENDENT TOMORROW



Eve Arnold:
truth lies and
the camera

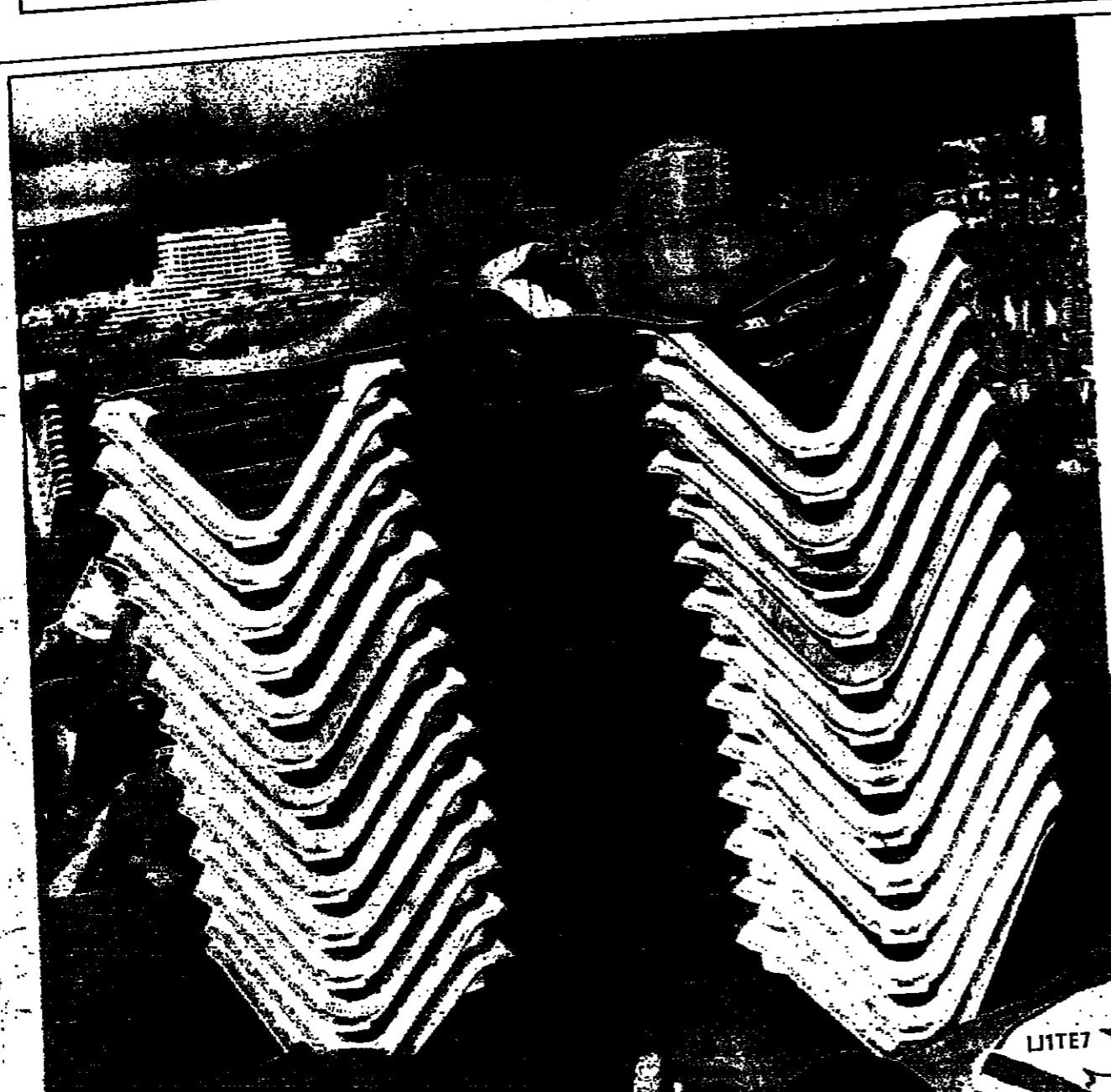


Architecture:
Newcastle,
the cutting
edge city

Hard labour: Miscarriage threat of the 35-hour week



Rolf Harris:
It's only vet 'n'
roll, but we
like it



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4/TORY CONFERENCE

Immigrants' loyalties are questioned by Tebbit

Conservative officials launched a counter-offensive yesterday after Lord Tebbit attacked Britain's multicultural society. Fran Abrams, Political Correspondent, examines a spate of outspoken comments by one of the party's most controversial right-wingers.

The moderate, all-inclusive image which William Hague tried to convey yesterday came under fire almost immediately from the more extreme elements in his party. Lord Tebbit made a fringe speech claiming immigrants could not be loyal to "two nations", while the controversial MP Alan Clark suggested killing the entire IRA in one night.

Mr Hague moved swiftly last night to distance himself from remarks by Lord Tebbit, in which the former Tory party chairman suggested that the nation was being "splintered and fractured" by increasing multi-culturalism.

Echoing the famous "cricket test" controversy which occurred after he claimed people were only truly integrated if they supported England at cricket, Lord Tebbit claimed multi-culturalism was divisive.

"You can't have a whole load of different cultures in one society, you have one culture for one society and if you get different societies mixed up, living close cheek-by-jowl, you will splinter our society in the way that devotion is splintering the

United Kingdom," he said. "Multi-culturalism is a divisive force. One cannot uphold two sets of ethics or be loyal to two nations, any more than a man can have two masters. It perpetuates ethnic divisions because nationality is in the long term more about culture than ethnicity.

"Youngsters of all races born here should be taught that British history is their history, or they will forever be foreigners holding British passports and this kingdom will become a Yugoslavia," he said, underlining similar comments which he made in a weekend television interview.

He also blamed several of his most senior colleagues for the current state of the party.

"Blame Margaret Thatcher, Michael Heseltine and John Major. She left old Labour too weak to resist new Labour. Michael Heseltine's vendetta against her tore the Tories apart, leaving a haemorrhage of membership pouring from the party's wounded wounds. As John Major distanced himself from Thatcher, Tony Blair picked up and wore with style the Tory clothes which had fitted Major like an Oxfam suit."

Earlier, Mr Hague had told the conference: "I want to see in our party more black people, more Asians, I want to see more young people." The principles which had brought him into the party included "patriotism without bigotry", he said.

Last night, Mr Hague's spokesman said Lord Tebbit's views did not chime with the leadership of his party. "We want a multicultural party. You can read that as a slap-down if you will," he said.

"Let us be frank," he told

Party leaders yesterday promised to scrap failed policies on local government. Colin Brown, Chief Political Correspondent, reports on the Tories' policy U-turn.

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Sir Norman said the Tories will oppose the setting up of regional assemblies by the Government,

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A number of Tory women were cheered at the rostrum when they said they had been at the pro-hunting rally in Hyde Park.

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Tory MPs accused of sexist remarks

Evidence of sexist comments by Conservative MPs in the House of Commons is to be presented to the Speaker, Betty Boothroyd, by Labour's chief whip.

The party's officials revealed last night that they were trawling videotapes of parliamentary proceedings to corroborate complaints made by women MPs. Labour whips and some of the party's 102 women members have decided to act after being told to "get back in the kitchen" during debates.

A party spokesman said other comments included: "Why aren't you at home cooking your husband's dinner?" and calls of "She's got PMT" whenever a female MP stood up to complain about anything.

The party said it was not releasing names yet, partly because it would be discourteous to the Speaker to give them to the press before giving them to her, and partly because it might lead to legal action if the evidence was not completely clear.

SEEN & HEARD

William Hague said Radio 4's Today programme had tipped a horse called Opposition Leader to win in the 3.30 at Warwick yesterday. "In years to come they will be tipping opposition leader to win in many more races than they would care to admit," he said. The horse came in second.

In addition to the 180,000 papers returned in William Hague's ballot, Central Office also received a number of electricity and gas bills, £5,000 in cash and cheques – and a lottery ticket.

"Lost An election. Can anyone help? If so, call 0171 637 1462." Poster in conference hall, which turned out to be a spoof advert for a cable TV comedy channel.

On today's agenda:

- Michael Howard, shadow Foreign Secretary
- John Redwood, shadow spokesman on trade and industry
- Sir Archie Hamilton, MP, chairman of the backbench 1922 Committee
- Lord Parkinson, the Tories' new chairman

And on the fringe:

- The European Foundation: Novelist Frederick Forsyth argues case against EU.
- UK space policy: Conservative consumer affairs spokeswoman Cheryl Gillan takes her party into orbit.
- Conservative Christian Fellowship: shadow Chancellor Peter Lilley takes a spiritual approach...



Old habits die hard: John Major is given a rapturous welcome by delegates yesterday

Photograph: Rui Xavier

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United and reformed we can win, Hague tells faithful

William Hague
yesterday demanded
unity and reform from
his party after he had
won the ballot endorsing
his leadership. Anthony
Bevins, Political Editor, at
the Blackpool
conference, heard him
call on his party to
'stand tall' again.

A four-to-one vote for Mr Hague's leadership and his outline headings for party reform emerged from a ballot of Conservative members. But with 399,203 ballot papers issued and only 143,299 giving Mr Hague their support, up to 64 per cent either did not vote, voted no (34,092), or spoiled their ballot (2,622). Nevertheless, Mr Hague told the conference yesterday:

"This is the week when we draw a line on the sand. The week when we stop apologising. The week when we get up off our knees and stand tall again. This is the week when the whole world will see we are back in business."

He urged rank-and-file representatives not to be afraid. "Have faith in our party's abiding values," he urged. "We have a mountain to climb, a

hard battle to win. But together, united and reformed, we can and we will prevail."

The underlying demand for unity had earlier brought strong applause for John Major, when he had provided an introduction for the new leader.

Striking a chord with the loyalist conference, the former prime minister provoked a cry of protest from the hall when he said that perhaps he was to

blame for the election defeat.

But there was strong applause when he added: "Perhaps divided views ... in the parliamentary party made our position untenable."

Mr Major said the party faced a simple choice: "Reform the party, back William Hague, rediscover the art of working together, fight every seat for every vote - or fight one another and lose elections."

He also hinted at criticism of Baroness Thatcher's sniping saying: "I propose to give William Hague the unqualified support - in public and in private - that he has a right to expect from his predecessor."

"If I should disagree with William, I'll do it in private ... not on the media, not in anonymous briefings to the press that breed suspicion and distrust."

The demand for unity ran

through "Blueprint for Change", Mr Hague's consultation paper for reform.

There were repeated calls for discipline, with greater central control over the management of the party in critical areas - such as the leadership election rules and the selection of candidates. The paper said: "The principles of democracy and decentralisation bring with them responsibility. Our intention is to build a party that is membership- and constituency-based."

But Eric Chalker, an elected member of the party's National Union executive - the voluntary wing - and a long-standing pro-democracy campaigner, told *The Independent*: "It's a topsy-turvy world. It is reverse accountability. There is more discipline than decentralisation."

Party seeks to become top voluntary movement

The Conservatives want to become 'the most effective volunteer political movement in western Europe'. Anthony Bevins dissects their 'Blueprint for Change'.

A paper published yesterday will form the basis of a reform package for a special party conference next spring - introducing a new and unified party constitution.

The Urgency of Change. The case for change is put in the context of the history of the 20th century, during which the Conservatives will have been in government, either alone or in coalition, for nearly 70 years. "No wonder," the paper says, "that political historians have already labelled our century the Conservative century."

However, it then adds: "On 1 May, the Conservative Party suffered its heaviest defeat in a general election since 1906." With only 165 MPs, no representation of Scotland, Wales or many of the country's great cities and towns, the number of councillors more than halved since the mid-80s, and a membership down from an estimated million-plus in 1979 to under 400,000 today, the leadership believes that the opportunity has to be taken for root-and-branch change.

This decline is structural, not cyclical. It is not just a result of temporary political unpopularity, and there is no evidence of a sustained revival of membership ... even during years of ... political success."

Our Organisational Mission. "Our mission is to create the greatest volunteer party in the western democratic world,

a party more than double our current size that can provide a sustainable advantage for Conservatives at all levels of British electoral contest." But that will involve "trade-offs". The paper says: "We want a party which is more involving, listening and participative. But we also want a party which is cohesive, fast-moving and able to engage in mature debate without appearing perpetually disunited."

A Single Party - a Single Constitution. "Central to the reform programme will be the formation of a single party structure embodied in a single constitution" - bringing together the "loose structures and cumbersome committees" of the existing voluntary, professional and representative wings of the party. A single governing body is proposed, with some elected members, but "sensitive" issues would be managed by sub-committees, which would control the rules for leadership elections, candidate selection, the conference, and membership.

A Streamlined Volunteer Organisation. Constituency association chairmen would meet twice a year as a National Convention, and the six members of its executive would have places on the party board. One executive place might be reserved for a woman.

New Channels for Involvement. A revitalised Conservative Political Centre would offer members a role in policy-making. There would be a new youth organisation, called Conservative Future, and a Women's Network, to "encourage talented women".

Revival in Local Government. A Conservative councillors' association is proposed, with a convention of Tory council leaders meeting every year, and a senior councillor to be



Upwardly mobile: "We have a mountain to climb, but together, we can and we will prevail"

Photograph: Tom Pilston

SKETCH BY DAVID AARONOVITCH

Midget Entertainers put on their show

William was adamant: the Tony Blairites had had a big conference and now the Outlaws - their deadly rivals - must have one too. "Anyway, their's was a jolly rotten conference," he said bitterly. "And we can hold a much better one, with more clapping 'n' more refreshments."

His colleagues regarded William with admiration but admiration tinged with alarm. The Blairites' event, held in magnificent surroundings of the church hall, had been generally regarded as a success. The local newspaper had reported, and even the vicar had put in a brief appearance.

As ever, it was Howard who braved his leader's storm with practical objections. "But what are we going to do for a party?" he objected. "You've gotta have a party, otherwise you jus' make speeches to yourselves an' no one listens, an' no one reports it."

As it happened the Outlaws were just now passing a large brick building with neglected, overgrown lawns. Above the door, on a rain-damaged painted sign, was the legend, "Dunrulin Home for Retired Gentlefolk". From under this sign an old man with thick glasses rushed up to the Outlaws.

"Ah! Here you are at last!" he puffed. "I thought you'd never come. They're all waiting for you inside!" William did not hesitate. He sensed that here was the audience that he had been seeking.

Inside, William and the Outlaws found themselves standing on a low platform. In

front of them were row after row of the oldest, most wrinkled people that they had ever seen, an army in bath-chairs. The short-sighted man introduced the Outlaws as the Botley Troupe of Midget Entertainers.

William cleared his throat. "Actually," he announced, "we're not here to do tricks. We're here to have a conference." He paused and, to his amazement, was applauded. Emboldened, he went on. "So, we're going to have speeches an' votes." The sound of clapping filled the hall. A delighted William continued.

"Now, if any of you woul' like to say anything first, then jus' indicate."

At the back of the hall a thin hand was raised, shakily. William invited its owner - a tall, wistful-looking old man with glasses - to come down to the front. Introducing himself as "the Major", and speaking in lugubrious tones, the old man spoke about his recent "bereavement", the importance of knowing who your true friends are, and the other afflictions of advanced age. Then he shuffled sadly off.

It was time, William thought, for him to fiven things up. He drew himself up to his full height. "Boo!" he said loudly. There was a scattering of applause, a muffled groan and several old ladies toppled from their chairs and lay, unmoving, on the floor. "They're not dead," said William sternly, "they're jus' sleepin'." "No, William," said Howard, who had gone to investigate, "Ac-

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FROM THE FLOOR: GAVIN WILLIAMSON

All blue rinse and pinstripes

This is my third year at conference and nothing has changed. The representatives can still be neatly divided into two groups.

The first are the blue rinse brigade who form the backbone of the party. The second are the young, aspiring prime ministers - all of them male - who strut about in their pinstripes and highly-polished shoes. The first group are dying out and the second are always going to be a small minority.

It is my dream that the Conservative activist of tomorrow will not turn up here with his collection of five suits plus dinner jacket. What is wrong with the T-shirts and jeans he wears every day at university?

William Hague said yester-

day that he wanted to see more young people in the Conservatives. I would ask him to make our party the best party to be at.

We need to get away from the desperate networking which takes place here every year. Everyone under 30 is clamouring to be the next candidate for Kensington and Chelsea - which is hardly inspiring to a young person arriving at conference for the first time. We need to see people talking excitedly about ideas and the reform of both party and country, not about how to advance their own careers.

The problem is that the Tory party is not putting its resources into young people. Until three years ago the chairman of Conservative Students

was a paid sabbatical post with money to spend on recruiting young members.

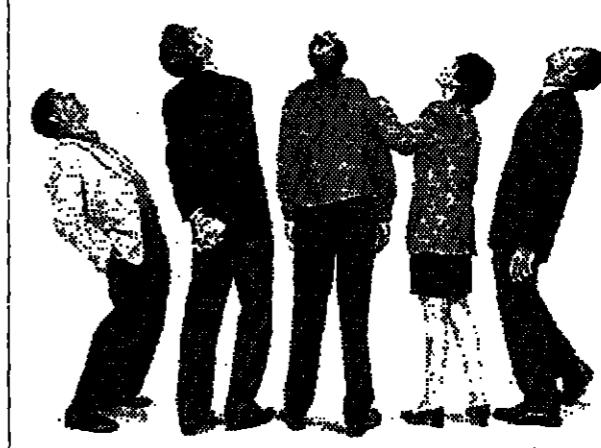
Now the only person at Central Office who can deal with students' concerns does

evening shifts in a bar for the privilege of working unpaid

for the party during the day.

In his Green Paper yesterday Mr Hague suggested merging the party's three youth organisations - Conservative Students, Young Conservatives and Conservative Graduates - into one group called Conservative Future. We all accept the need to reform, but fiddling with the structures does not bring in new members. Investment does.

Gavin Williamson is chairman of Conservative Students.



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On 16th August, 1997, an article was printed in Autocar titled 'Hot Hatch Supertest'.

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Of the 106 the article reported that '...it munches

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Of the 306. '...it delivers driving pleasure in huge doses... excellent in all respects...'

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Ireland's foreign minister is forced to resign



Gerry Adams, Lucinda Bhreathnach (left) and Mairead Keane at Stormont yesterday

He should have been soaking up the plaudits at Stormont as the talks took another step forward yesterday. But instead, as David McKittrick and Alan Murdoch report, Ray Burke, the Irish foreign minister and co-sponsor of the talks, was forced to resign.

First out of the talks building to speak to the media yesterday was Paul Murphy, the minister for political development, who reported that things were "very businesslike, very workmanlike".

Inside, the participants were launching the three strands of the negotiations. Strand one deals with internal administration, strand two concerns Northern Ireland's relationship with the Republic of Ireland; strand three encompasses overall Anglo-Irish relations.

Outside the talks, Ray Burke, who as Irish minister for foreign affairs had led the Dublin team at Stormont, resigned following scandals over sleaze.

Mr Burke, who has also quit the Dail after 24 years, had been under siege for weeks after admitting taking £30,000 in cash in 1989 when a business associate was seeking extensive planning permissions in his north Dublin base. Despite claiming he was the victim of a witch-hunt, his denial last month that any favour was offered for the cash did not convince voters. Only 21 per cent in polls said they believed him: 56 per cent urged him to step down.

Bertie Ahern, the Taoiseach, will retain the foreign brief until a successor is chosen and at Stormont yesterday Mr Burke's place was taken by the justice minister, John O'Donoghue and Liz O'Donnell, the junior foreign minister.

Emerging from the building Mr Murphy said: "It was a good start." It was obviously early days, he added, but there was no doubt progress had been made: there had been no unpleasant exchanges and it was "in no way governed by rancour."

There was a slightly different perspective from Monica McWilliams, leader of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition.

"It was a testy enough meeting and there was quite a bit of tension in the room," she said. "There were no comments exchanged, but there were background noises when people were delivering their speeches and as you can imagine there was quite a bit of disagreement."

The background noises, another delegate privately revealed, had consisted of "grunts, groans and loud conversation" from the direction of the Ulster Unionist delegation during contributions from Sinn Fein's Martin McGuinness and others.

The chief grunter and groaner was Unionist MP Ken Maginnis, who himself later said dismissively of the Republicans: "They appeared to be out of their depth today. There was nothing new – it was a series of clichés and platitudes."

A Loyalist delegate summed up his sense that there had been a certain amount of sparing without any actual damage being inflicted: "Ach it's all right – it's handbags at 40 paces."

Royal Academy censures creator of Sensation

The Royal Academy's ruling council yesterday censured its controversial exhibitions secretary Norman Rosenthal for remarks he made in a television programme. They then issued a vote of confidence in him.

Whether the man who put the Royal Academy back on the cultural map with a series of highly regarded exhibitions, will choose to stay there in the long term is open to question.

Mr Rosenthal courted controversy most recently with *Sensation*, the exhibition of young British artists taken from the Saatchi collection, and particularly its inclusion of a painting of Myra Hindley, which was damaged by protesters.

Three Academicians have resigned in recent weeks, one openly claiming that the behaviour of Mr Rosenthal was partly responsible, particularly the way he insulted an Academician on the BBC *Omibus* programme about the Royal Academy.

Mr Rosenthal said of the 79-year-old figurative painter John Ward: "What is the point of painting a picture unless it is going to change the world? ... John Ward passionately believes in what he is doing and somehow thinks he is making real art. Maybe I am wrong and he is right, and the world will suddenly declare John Ward RA to be a great artist, but ... I doubt it."

— David Lister

Edinburgh museum to charge

The citizens of Edinburgh will pay £3 a visit when they go to the Royal Museum following a decision by the National Museums of Scotland to bring in admission charges.

The timing is an embarrassment for the Government which is in the middle of an inquiry into the funding of museums. Mark Fisher, the arts minister, has spoken out vigorously in favour of free admission and against charges.

He told the Commons shortly after the election: "We do not want anyone to be charged entry to national museums and galleries ... The Government believes that all members of the community should be able to enjoy our great national museums and galleries: they should be for the many, not just the few."

— David Lister

Jacobite treasures for sale

A piece of cloth bearing a speck of the blood of James II is among a box of Jacobite treasures due to be auctioned next month.

The cloth, a relic from the last Stuart monarch, and also hair from him, his second wife, Mary, and eldest son, are said to have been passed by his grandson, Bonnie Prince Charlie, to a Scottish landowner in 1748. The box and its contents were included for a 2,000-item sale at Kelso on 23 November.

Postal workers cry wolf

Royal Mail "posties" have always had to play nip and tuck with the domestic mutt. Then canine fashion gave them the Rottweiler to contend with, followed by the American-bred pit bull terrier.

But the importation of hybrid wolves has prompted complaints to the Government. Billy Hayes, assistant secretary of the Communication Workers' Union, which represents post workers, said: "Introducing hybrid wolves into our dog population takes people's irresponsibility to new levels of stupidity."

The RSPCA last month called on ministers to issue clear guidelines to local authorities on the identification of the wolves.

— Barrie Clement



Modern men: Chris Smith, Culture Secretary, and Nicholas Serota, director of the Tate Gallery, inspecting Banksy power station yesterday as work began to convert it into the gallery's new home
Photograph: Andrew Burman

Porter complains of unfair treatment

Dame Shirley Porter clashed with a QC in the High Court yesterday, complaining that she was being unreasonably treated in the witness box while giving her account of the Homes for Votes affair. Ian Burrell watched the second day of her evidence.

She went on: "It may be I am a little bit slower than I used to be but I cannot take in all this information and papers and just give off the cuff replies."

"I take it very seriously. I am here to defend myself. I am here to clear my name and take great exception if you think I am playing around with it. I am not."

Asked by Mr Jones if she had thought of refreshing her memory about the documents before coming to court, Dame Shirley said she had tried but it appeared that quite a lot had not sunk in.

She said that she had previously tried to take her mind away from the whole affair because she was so dismayed at the way the council had been criticised.

She said: "I was so upset at the way all the work that we had done had been interpreted that I blotted it out."

Mr Jones replied: "The reason you blotted it out was because it is too painful to look at the detail in black and white, and it is too easy to complain about unfairness."

Dame Shirley said: "That is absolutely wrong ... I am guilty of nothing."

Mr Magill found that Westminster council had sought to fix election results by using the right-to-buy scheme to move people likely to vote Tory into marginal wards. Dame Shirley said that Westminster's actions were typical in the world of local government.

The trial continues

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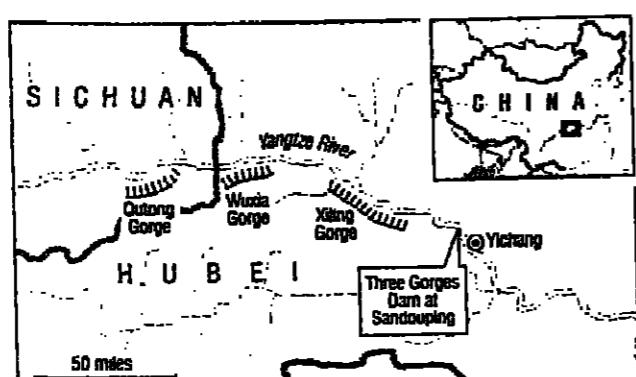


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Bulldozer triumphs as time runs out for the mighty Yangtze

China has taken the first steps towards diverting the course of the mighty Yangtze. Next month, the controversial Three Gorges Dam will reach the point of no return. Teresa Poole looks at a project criticised as an environmental disaster in the making.



It was nearly 80 years ago that the father of the Chinese republic, Sun Yat-sen, first proposed a dam across the Yangtze. But for the boatmen who work the river near the massive dam site in central Hubei province, this week marked the turning point.

Travelling by boat downstream towards the dam project, the majestic river starts to make a sweeping leftwards bend as one approaches China's biggest construction project since the Great Wall. Work started three years ago and since then the Yangtze boatmen have watched an army of peasants digging a canal to the right-hand side, part of the biggest earth-moving exercise in history. At the same time, a wall of concrete - the preliminary "coffer dam" - has slowly been inching its way across the river, slicing into the main stream and gradually re-routing this stately river into its new channel.

Two days ago, the boatmen were told that they could no longer travel along the route Mother Nature intended, and must instead swing out through the four-kilometre canal. Over

the next four weeks, the gap in the coffer dam will slowly be closed across the original river, culminating in a ceremony early next month in which the final blocks will be put in place under the watchful eye of the dam's most powerful backer, the prime minister, Li Peng. Thus will the Yangtze be diverted by the might of the bulldozer.

With the natural riverbed then dry below the coffer dam, work will begin on the real dam wall, a 175-metre curtain of concrete which will sweep between the hills on either side of the river. When the whole project is completed in 2009, the dam will have created 663-km long snake-like reservoir which will flood an area twice the size of the Isle of Wight. The upstream river level will have risen 100 metres, and the famous Three Gorges scenery will be underwater.

For both opponents and champions of the project, the scale of the endeavour is breathtaking. By completion, some 103 million cubic metres of soil and rock will have been excavated. Most controversially, around 1.2 million people,

1,600 enterprises, several cities, 140 towns and 4,500 villages will have been relocated.

The Chinese government is putting its money where its mouth is: by the end of the year it will have spent 27 billion yuan (£2bn), but this is nothing compared with the projected total cost of 203 billion yuan.

The questions which surround the project are as massive as its demand for cement. The human rights implications of the forced relocation is one major aspect of the project on which China has not encouraged foreign scrutiny. But there are less emotive issues that are just as worrying: the silt that will build up behind the dam, the threat to fish and fauna, and the submersion of archaeological relics.

For the Yangtze boatmen, the project is already a nuisance. If the river flow is too strong their boats will not be able safely to pass through the canal and will have to use a temporary ship-lock which will not be ready until next May. And during high flood season, navigation will be prohibited completely.

"I came, I saw and I was conquered," said President Roosevelt when he inaugurated the Hoover Dam in 1935. Few Western leaders would be likely to repeat such gushing enthusiasm today. Worldwide, huge dams have become increasingly controversial.

One of the most famous dams of all time was the Aswan Dam in Egypt in the 1950s, where the West and the Soviet Union vied with each other to finance the expensive pro-

ject, and thus gain political influence. The Russians won. At the time, the project was enormously popular. Crowds chanted: "After the dam, our land will be paradise." But the project brought few benefits in the longer term.

Elsewhere, opposition to large dams has had dramatic consequences. Conservationists in Tasmania failed to prevent the government creating the Pedder dam in the 1960s. In 1983, however, crowds forced

a retreat on proposals to build a dam close to the junction of the Franklin and Gordon rivers, which would have flooded a wilderness area. More recently, there have been moves to restore the environmental unique Lake Pedder, by draining the reservoir which the dam created.

In eastern Europe, the popular resistance to dams played a key role in creating the mass movements which ended the Communist era. The Gab-

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elsewhere ended one-party rule throughout the region.

More recently, dams have remained highly controversial.

The Pergau dam in Malaysia

was heavily funded from the British aid budget, so that the taxpayer subsidised British contractors. An official con-

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Audit Office forced the Gov-

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The adventure does not seem

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— Steve Crowshaw

The builders who were dammed

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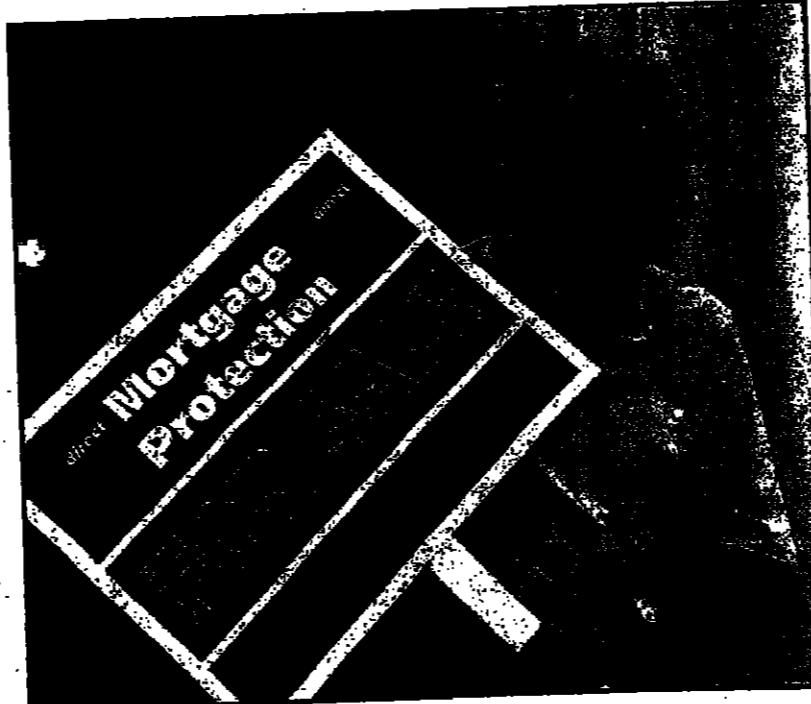
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Smith urged to publish ROH report

A government-ordered inquiry into the Royal Opera House's relationship with the Arts Council is critical of both institutions. But, as David Lister found, the Arts Council chose only to release a summary of the inquiry's findings.

The financial management and systems of the Royal Opera House need to be improved, according to an independent inquiry. The study, by City lawyer Edward Walker-Arnott, concluded that there were "difficulties and tension in the relationship" between the ROH and its funding body, and "both sides should take some criticism".

With criticisms generally muted, the inquiry report was welcomed yesterday by Lord Gowrie, the Arts Council chairman. But the Arts Council attracted immediate flak for publishing only a summary rather than the report in its entirety, leading to speculation that the full report may have contained further criticisms.

Questions are likely to be raised as to

whether there should have been an independent inquiry, rather than Chris Smith, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, allowing the Arts Council to commission a report from Mr Walker-Arnott, release only a summary, and show it to the Royal Opera House management before publishing it.

Raymond Gubbay, a classical music promoter who has worked with the Royal Opera House in the past, last night wrote to Mr Smith, urging him to publish the whole report. "How better to clear the air than to publish Mr Walker-Arnott's findings in full. Why should we be asked to make do with a bowdlerised version? In the era of open government under new Labour, this is hardly setting a good example," Mr Gubbay wrote.

The summary uses such phrases as "Mr Walker-Arnott makes a number of detailed and technical criticisms ... without explaining what they were. Sources said last night that some Arts Council members remain distinctly unhappy, and are understood to be threatening to withhold the next

tranche of Royal Opera House lottery money (some £8m of its £78m) if they are not more satisfied with the way the ROH is managing the redevelopment project and the Arts Council's monitoring of it.

Mr Smith ordered the inquiry following the resignation of Genista McIntosh as chief executive of the ROH and her replacement by the Arts Council secretary-general Mary Allen, without the post being advertised. The ROH receives £78m of lottery money from the Arts Council.

In his report, Mr Walker-Arnott looks into the state of the Royal Opera House lottery funded development, the management systems, structure and procedures to be operated by the ROH during its closure period, and the ROH's relationship with its funding body the Arts Council, including systems of accountability. He concludes: "There is a need for clarity in setting out what is expected in the relationships between the Arts Council and the organisations it funds; rigour in assessing and monitoring these organisations; and the ability and willingness to apply sanctions to those organisations where necessary."



David Mellor after his meeting yesterday. Photograph: Kieran Doherty/Reuters

Italian ambassador assures Mellor over treatment of football fans

The former minister David Mellor yesterday said he had won assurances from Italian authorities about how English fans will be treated at this weekend's crucial World Cup qualifying match in Rome.

Mr Mellor, the head of the Government's new football task force, had voiced fears that travelling supporters would be treated like "animals" by Italian police, facing three separate searches and having many possessions - including coins - confiscated.

However, after a 45-minute meeting yesterday with the Italian ambassador Paolo Galli, Mr Mellor said he had been informed that the English contingent would receive a "warm welcome" in Rome. The former Conservative Arts minister, who was accompanied by representatives of supporters' groups, said he had also been told that English fans would be treated the same as Italians.

He said: "The Chief of Police in Rome

has assured the ambassador that the civil rights of visiting supporters will be respected, and oppressive policing will not be a feature."

Mr Mellor added: "[The Italian ambassador] assured me nothing will be done to the English fans that will not also be done to Italian fans."

However, following the news that British police have already identified 670 known trouble makers among those going to Italy, Mr Mellor and rest of the delegation recognised the need to tackle a small minority of "scum" who follow Eng-

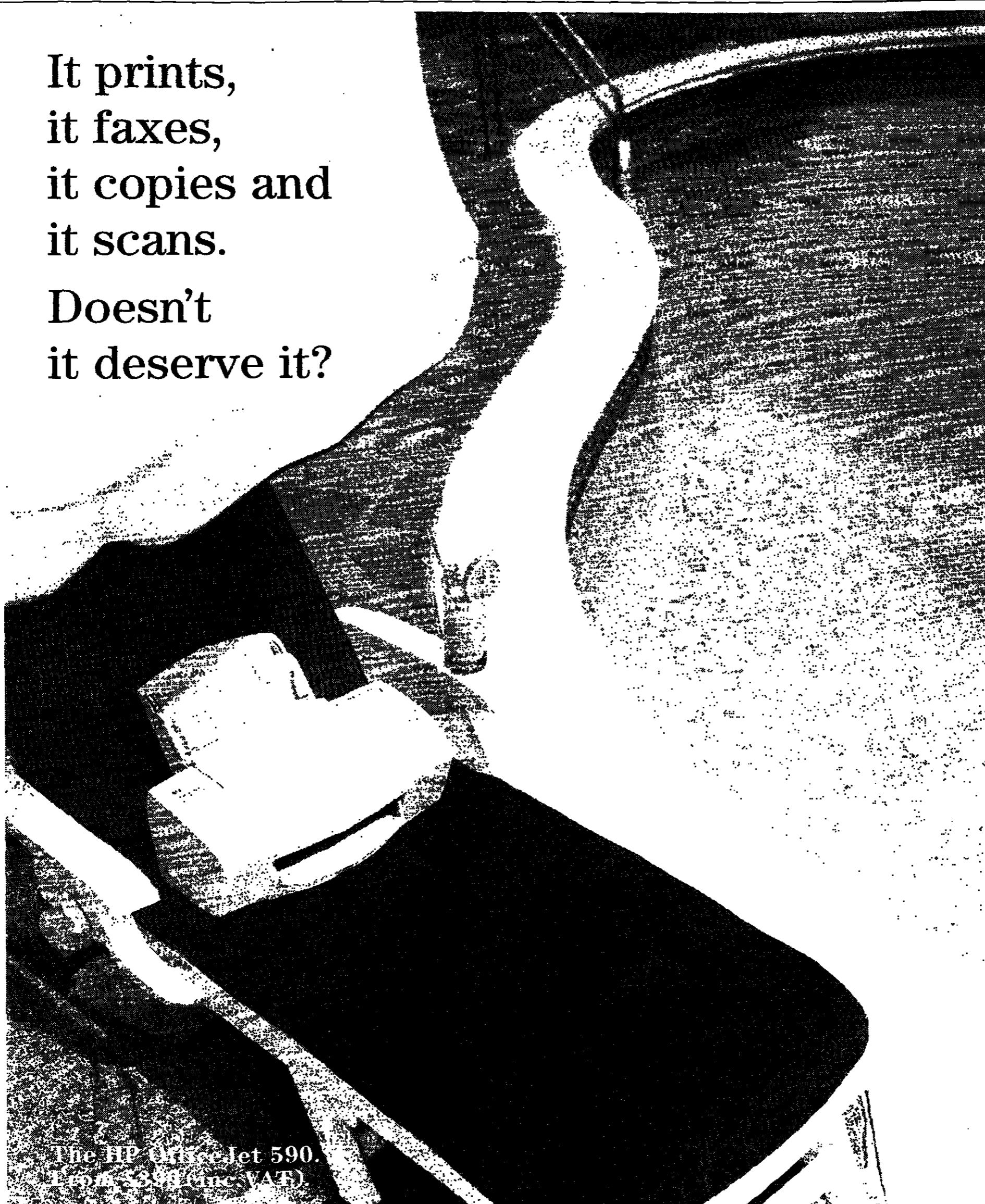
"Some people will behave badly, but the art of policing is to differentiate between people who behave badly and those who do not," he said.

Ten thousand fans are expected to travel to the match, including up to 1,000 without tickets.

- Michael Streeter

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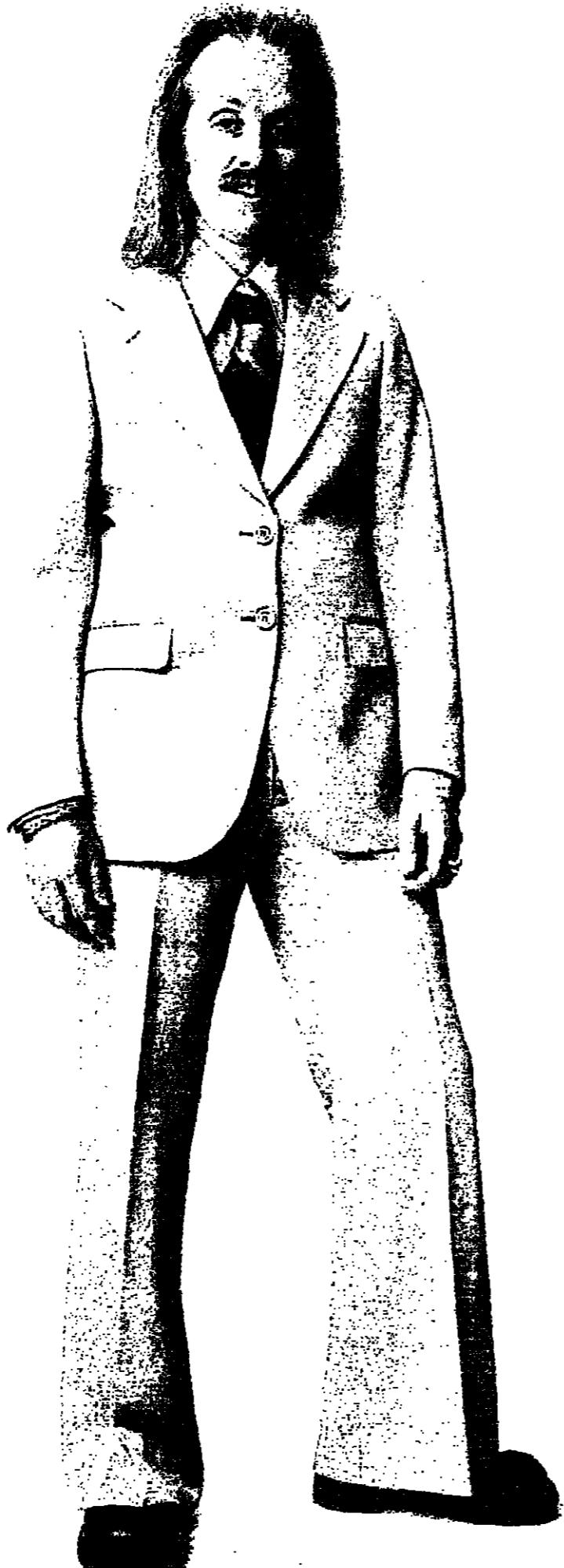
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A nurse treating a patient in the Western Cape. Millions of blacks receive no health care

Photograph: Ian Berry

Would your company like a phone system that never goes out of date?



Drugs giants flex muscles as SA tries to cut health bill

South Africa is daring to take on the major players of the pharmaceutical industry. Mary Braid watched the drugs multinationals fight back. It was not a pretty sight.

The heavy threats began on Monday. Merck, the major United States pharmaceutical corporation, warned that it might pull out of South Africa — taking thousands of jobs and a proposed 50 million rand (£7m) investment with it — if health minister Dr Nkosazana Zuma did not withdraw plans to import patented drugs.

Then the US waded in. With 12 American pharmaceutical companies, with a combined revenue of R705 billion (£100bn), operating in South Africa, the US ambassador James Joseph called for the removal of a clause in legislation aimed at curbing health costs.

On the face of it, the legislation proposed by the stubborn Dr Zuma, a juggernaut of a minister, is a modest one, and complies with the free-market principles so cherished by the pharmaceutical giants.

Struggling to create the country's first national health service, she wants the multinationals to reduce their South African prices. If they do not, she promises to buy their drugs from countries

where they already sell them cheaper.

Mr Joseph insisted that the clause overrode "universally accepted principles of patent protection"; patents which the drug companies argue provide the investment for medical research. He also had a warning. The new legislation would send a negative signal about intellectual property rights to technology companies which might otherwise play a crucial role in South Africa's development.

Finally, the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers said the legislation's assault on patent protection could result in South Africa being denied access to any anti-Aids drugs which might come on the market.

That is no idle threat in a country where HIV infection is rising at an alarming rate. The drug companies insist that the move violates World Trade Organisation agreements. Dr Zuma disagrees. And she also promises that where company patents in SA have expired she will shop abroad for cheap generics to encourage home producers of generics to cut their prices.

Dr Zuma's adviser, Dr Wilbert Banenberg of the World Health Organisation, calculates that R385 million (£57m) could be saved by buying cheaper drugs on the world market. It does not help that she does not have the country's doctors fully on side. Her plans to introduce a year's compulsory community service for medical graduates, who normally make a beeline for the private sector, has caused some alienation.

The companies insist they are being unfairly targeted and that South Africa's drug markup, of up to 82 per cent, is the fault of middle men and South Africa's inefficient and corrupt distribution system. But Charles Medawar, author of several books on the pharmaceutical industry, says South Africa is getting the textbook treatment reserved for countries — particularly in the Third World where there is less trade muscle — who refuse to play the international pharmaceutical game. "The companies have a well-deserved reputation for overbearing behaviour," he said. While the industry has a point about research funding,

its enormous profits suggest the balance is wrong. Mr Medawar says South Africa should ignore threats about access to future Aids drugs. The companies will undoubtedly price any new medication out of their pocket anyway.

Despite the might of the industry, rebellions occur from time to time and the pharmaceutical giants fight — and win — in almost every case. In the mid Eighties the government of Bangladesh attempted to introduce an essential drug list and remove many other products from the market. Its campaign collapsed within days of industry threats to deinvest.

"It was a small market but the drug companies feared a domino effect," Mr Medawar said.

"These companies prefer a totally free, unregulated market and they have enormous resources and powerful backers. If it was possible we should place more emphasis on the rights and responsibilities of them than we do on governments. They are not elected and yet their managers take decisions which mean life and death to communities all over the world."

Dr Zuma is undoubtedly up against formidable opponents, and with wider trade implications affecting other ministries now spelled out, her chances of winning seem slim.

It does not help that she does not have the country's doctors fully on side. Her plans to introduce a year's compulsory community service for medical graduates, who normally make a beeline for the private sector, has caused some alienation.

The Medical Association of South Africa is also opposing Dr Zuma's intention to impose the use of generic medicines. There is evidence of over-prescribing among doctors. The relationship between doctors and drug companies, already considered too cosy by the department of health, is also the target of planned Zuma legislation. It may be that she has taken on too many opponents at one time.

Drought forces villagers to forage for jungle leaves

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Hundreds of tribal people have died of starvation and millions more are at risk from a chronic drought on the huge tropical island of New Guinea. Severe frost following a six-month dry period, caused by the meteorological phenomenon El Niño, has wrecked crops. Richard Lloyd-Parry reports from Mount Hagen.

The Antara News Agency in Jakarta reported yesterday that 400 people in Irian Jaya, the Indonesian-controlled western half of the island, had so far died of malnutrition. In Papua New Guinea (PNG), in the eastern half of the island, villagers in parts of the remote highlands have been reduced to foraging for jungle ferns after a severe frost which has blighted vegetables already shrunk by the worst drought in living memory.

In Mount Hagen, the capital of Papua New Guinea's Western Highlands province, food prices have tripled, and in the worst-hit areas local people are surviving for days at a time on jungle leaves. The El Niño weather pattern, caused by warming sea temperatures in the Pacific, has reduced mountain streams to a trickle, 10m-deep wells have run dry, and hundreds of people have deserted mountain valleys in search of water.

Local government officials stress that it is not yet a "Somalian or Ethiopian situation", but unless heavy rains begin soon, they predict a catastrophe which will last well into next year. The highest estimate for PNG, so far unconfirmed, put

the number of dead at around 70, most of them elderly. But 3½ million people, 85 per cent of the population, are subsistence farmers, many of them dependent on crops such as sweet potato which take a long time to grow. If the wet season does not begin soon, it will not only wipe out this season's crops, but also make it impossible to sow for next year.

"The problem is that we don't know if we're at the end of it, or in the middle of it," said Jack Karali of the Western Highlands provincial government. "The people haven't started killing their pigs yet, and there's always something they can eat from the jungle. But in the last three or four weeks, things have started to fall apart. If we continue without rain for the next month or so, we will be in serious trouble."

Papua New Guinea is a poor country whose central government is a substantial beneficiary of foreign aid handouts. A team of Australian experts has been conducting a survey of the entire country to assess priorities, but any relief effort faces enormous logistical and cultural difficulties.

Showers over the last three days have raised hopes that the crisis may be over, but they have also swamped dirt roads leading to some of the worst hit areas. This morning, officials from Mount Hagen will attempt to convoy food to the frost-stricken Tambul district, but relief efforts are complicated by the threat of so-called "rascals" — bandits who hold up vehicles, especially on slippery or rutted sections of road.

"They know that they will get the food eventually," says Mr Karali. "But we can't rule out the possibility that certain people may try to get their hands on it a bit earlier by unofficial means."

15/NAZI TRIAL

THE INDEPENDENT
WEDNESDAY
8 OCTOBER 1997

Papon's sins put post-war France in dock



Careerist or cipher? Maurice Papon claims that his role in the arrest of 1,558 Jewish men, women and children in 1942-44 was just a formality

Photograph: Popperfoto

Maurice Papon served the French state with distinction for nearly 50 years. Today, at the age of 87, he goes on trial in Bordeaux for "complicity in crimes against humanity" for his role in the deportation of Jews by the "Vichy" regime in 1942-44.

Is Papon simply a scapegoat for a nation's bad conscience? Why try him now after 53 years?

The facts of the case are scarcely in dispute. Maurice Papon, as secretary-general to the police chief in the Bordeaux area, organised the arrest of 1,558 Jewish men, women and children in 1942-44.

Papon does not deny it; he cannot: the documents, bearing his signature, in stiff, pompous French officialese, still exist. "I have the honour to report to you that the convoy of 443 Jews which left Bordeaux on 26 August arrived at the station of Le Bourget ..."

Mr Papon and his lawyers say that he had no choice; that his role was just a formality; that he managed to rescue, in his own chilling phrase from another contemporary memo, "interesting Jews".

The three-month trial will turn on whether, as he claims, Papon was a cipher. Or whether, as the prosecution claims, he was a willing, efficient and energetic tool of genocide, not from anti-semitism, or pro-Hitlerism, but from self-interest: in other words from careerism.

The Papon trial will convulse France because it raises other questions which it has no legal jurisdiction to answer. How is it that Maurice Papon survived the purges and prosecutions of Vichy collaborators? How did he pass, seamlessly, into the



De Gaulle: Chief aim was to restore national unity

portion of French forced labourers. There were no trials of officials accused specifically of involvement in the deportation of Jews.

De Gaulle's choices were, in a sense, vindicated. National unity was rapidly restored; France was accepted as one of the victors of the war; and the foundations were built for three decades of rapid economic and social progress ("les trente glorieuses"). But as Mr Baruch also says, the decision to bind the wounds of Vichy with much of the poison trapped inside helps to explain why "the wounds are still running today".

The strength of the far-right National Front (FN) is one symptom of that poison: two of the most powerful currents of support for the FN are Vichy apologists and anti-semitic, diehard Catholic traditionalists.

From the Seventies, a series of books and a very influential movie - *The Sorrow and the Fury* - began to prise the country's bandages apart. For a while, it was fashionable on the left, and abroad, to believe that most of France had collaborated willingly with Nazism. This, too, is a false picture. But it is true enough that the vast majority of French people accepted Vichy at first; that there was little organised resistance until 1943; and that there were few church or official voices raised against the persecution of the Jews.

Hundreds of courageous French people did, however, help individual Jewish families to survive. More than 80,000 French Jews, and French-based Jews perished in camps in Poland, or in France, but another 175,000 - proportionately far more than in other occupied countries - weathered the war.

Papon is an uncomfortable symbol of French history precisely because he, like France, muddled through Vichy and thrived post-Vichy. His past caught up with him in 1981 but it has still taken 16 years to bring him to trial. There was considerable resistance to the prosecution in the French state, not least from the late President Mitterrand, whose own involvement in the early years of Vichy remains murky.

What good will the trial do? Prosecutors and Jewish groups say the question is irrelevant. Papon played a part in the greatest crime of the century and, even at 87, should be forced to face up to his actions (he has never shown the least sign of remorse).

On the wider, political and moral questions of how the trial will affect the French psyche, opinion is divided. On the far right, and in parts of the centre right, the trial is dismissed as a pointless or damaging circus. But a recent poll in the magazine *L'Express* suggested that the great majority of French people - 72 per cent - approved of the prosecution.

Almost two-thirds of French people regarded Vichy as a live and relevant issue today. Younger people - those under 25 - were especially insistent that Vichy was something close and important to their lives and not a closed chapter.

BY JOHN LICHFIELD

who first willed it that way was De Gaulle, the man who incarnated resistance to Vichyism.

Papon is a living symbol of the myth deliberately fostered by De Gaulle in 1944-45 that Vichy was the aberration of a wicked few: that the remainder of France was divided between the heroic resistance and the innocent victims of occupation.

As the war ended, De Gaulle was not preoccupied by the holocaust. He was more concerned by the disaster which had almost befallen France. His aim was to restore, as rapidly as possible, a sense of French greatness. In particular, he wanted an instantly functioning state which would forestall triple potential evils: Communist takeover; civil-war; and - by no means the least evil in De Gaulle's eyes - a humiliating Anglo-American administration.

Tens of thousands of middle-ranking Vichy officials - some of whom, like Papon, had belatedly and cynically helped the resistance when Germany began to lose the war - survived into post-war government. In the words of Marc Olivier Baruch, Jewish-French historian of the Vichy bureaucracy: "It is clear that General de Gaulle preferred at the liberation an inspector of finances (who had served Vichy) over a resistance fighter who had sown his own stripes on his shirt."

There were thousands of official trials of collaborators, large and small, and tens of thousands of unofficial executions. But, in both cases, the Vichyists who were targeted were those who had directly fought the resistance or had been responsible for the disaster.

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THE LATE SHOW

In deference to the advanced age of the accused, and many of the witnesses, the trial of Maurice Papon will sit in the afternoons only. It is expected to last for at least three months, with a cut-off date of 23 December.

Character witnesses for Papon, depending on the time available, may include the former President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and former Prime Minister, Raymond Barre.

A large section of the trial will be given over to establishing the political and moral climate of Vichy France. Evidence will be given by the most eminent historians of the period: the American Robert Paxton, the French writers Henry Rousso and Henri Amouroux and the Nobel peace prize-winner Elie Wiesel. Over 50,000 documents have been assembled.

There may also be many days of abstruse legal argument. Although the basic facts are not in dispute, the legal basis for trying Papon for "complicity in crimes against humanity" is far from clear. Arguments on this point disrupted the trials of the German torturer Klaus Barbie in the 1980s and the Vichy militia chief, Paul Touvier, in the 1970s. The prosecution must prove that Papon had "personal complicity" in genocide, not simply that he acted within a Vichy state apparatus in which the important decisions were outside his competence.

Prosecutors will seek to prove that Papon showed unnecessary zeal in his rounding up of Jews; the defence will bring evidence that he did intervene to help some escape the net. It appears, however, that these interventions began only in late 1943 or early 1944 when Papon was in touch with the resistance and preparing the alibi which allowed him to survive the liberation.

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16/CLINTON'S TROUBLES

THE SCANDAL TRAIL

Paula Jones: 27 May 1998, has been set as the date for hearing the sexual harassment suit in which Ms Jones wants an admission from Mr Clinton that he made unwelcome sexual advances to her in 1991 when governor of Arkansas.

So far, Mr Clinton's attempts to settle without admitting guilt have failed, but with both parties running out of money an out-of-court settlement is still possible.

Whitewater: Three-year investigation led by independent prosecutor Kenneth Starr into the Clintons' involvement in an Arkansas land deal in the Eighties has so far failed to find evidence of illegality – although several of their associates in the deal have been convicted and gone to prison.

A key witness, Susan Mc-

Dougal, has been jailed in California for contempt of court after refusing to testify.

White House travel office: Whether Hillary Clinton lied about involvement in the dismissal of White House office travel staff in 1993. Investigation still in progress, but overtaken by other scandals.

Party funding: Did either Bill Clinton, or Al Gore break the law by receiving campaign funds from foreign interests and/or raising re-election funds from federal property?

The attorney-general Janet Reno decided last week that the investigation into Gore should be extended, but indicated that there was insufficient evidence against Clinton. That was before the discovery of the tapes.



Taped: President Clinton seen on video entertaining the donors in the White House

**to hell with it,
that'll do**



**well done!
fourth time lucky!**

**come on,
it was pretty tight**

**yep, it was an amazing display of
sheer parking genius.**

**I didn't want to
scuff the wheels, actually**

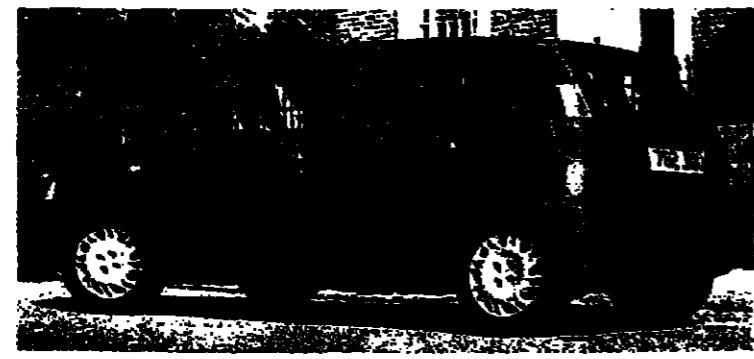
o.k. see you later then

sorry?

**if I'm not at the kerb in
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Cash inquiry senator rounds on the President

Clinton has been caught out again. Videotapes showing White House coffee mornings – whose purpose may or may not have been to solicit campaign funds – burst on to the political scene this week. Mary Dejevska asks whether this time, the mud will stick.

He is seen declining an offer of cheques – a clear acknowledgement that he knew the requirements of law and propriety...

Until the tapes came to light, Mr Clinton had seemed to be almost home and dry on the party-funding issue. Far with claims that his fund-raising activities had broken a law, Mr Clinton had responded with a mixture of aggressive self-defence (he was only doing what the Republic Party did, brazen denials (he did nothing illegal), political savvy (as the tapes appear to show, he knew exactly where the line between legal and illegal ran) and customary charm.

So successful was he, that Ms Reno, the government's chief law officer, had last week indicated in a letter to Republican senators that she had found no evidence that Mr Clinton had breached the law and it looked unlikely that she would extend her investigation beyond the initial 30 days. The same letter had explained her decision to extend a similar investigation into Vice-President Al Gore – a decision that could



Janet Reno: Her inquiry could face criticism

threaten his prospects of being elected president in the year 2000.

Mr Gore, hitherto seen as the administration's Mr Clean, has been accused of breaking the law by soliciting campaign funds from federal property (his White House office), diverting "soft money" contribution from general party funds to specific re-election campaigns, attending events the dedication of a Buddhist temple in California) as Vice-President, when the purpose was to raise party funds.

Less practised than Mr Clinton at parrying attacks, Mr Gore had looked defensive and diffident and, whatever happens, his reputation is damaged. With M Clinton – who will not be standing for election again – the belated discovery of the tapes could prove more damaging than the contents. And whatever Fred Thompson said yesterday could be Jane Reno's head hat rolls – for insufficient rigor in her investigation – and not that of the President.

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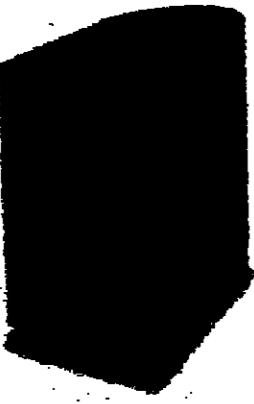
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A few good reasons not to be afraid of Edward Albee

'Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf' made Edward Albee a household name. But, for 10 or 12 years, it looked like he'd been forgotten. Enter 'Three Tall Women' and a new run of successes on Broadway and in the West End. A delicate balance restored, he might say

In interview, playwrights rarely sound so very different from their plays. Tom Stoppard is witty and word perfect even with an audience of one; Simon Gray teeters mordantly on the edge of self-disgust in person as in prose; and offstage and on Jonathan Harvey is as camp as a Bedouin housing estate. Edward Albee's best known plays have the civilised exterior of East Coast comfort: there are no inarticulate Eddie Carbones in his view from the bridge, only prosfs and tennis club habitués and well-heeled products of the WASP factory. But open the front door and all you can see is rage and cruelty and slurping alcoholism.

Let's get one thing out of the way. Albee doesn't touch alcohol – or hasn't for over 20 years. But yes, the exterior is very civilised in a mud-coloured tweed sort of way. This is not an original observation, but he is the spitting image of Roy Strong, wiry and grey and long-faced (though with a much less horticultural moustache than either Strong's or the black ferret in his own absurdly out-of-date mugshot on the back of the Penguin edition of *Three Tall Women*). As for the rage and the cruelty, Albee would argue that his characters tend to display these as the result of a malaise that he himself has taken pains to avoid. "I've always thought there's nothing worse than coming to the end of your life and realising that you haven't participated in it, and so I write about people who have done that to a certain extent." A gym-honed 68, Albee is somewhere between the end and the middle of a life in which he has participated far more actively than George and Martha, the couple in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, whose idea of hell is each other.

So, there's daylight between him and the broiling despair of his characters. But that doesn't mean he's any easier to interview than his plays are to watch. His answers can be unusually short, as if, in his own certainty, he has no need of prolixity. And when they stretch their legs and wander about a bit, they seem to be using their length to crush the crassness out of the question. You can usually tell you've been dolish when the first word of his answer is "probably". As in, how do the ideas make their way into his head in the first place? "Probably because I'm a writer. And they're plays rather than novels because I am a playwright." Ouch. Or why did *Three Tall Women*, the first Albee play ever to earn unanimous critical approval, open in the New York equivalent of the Almeida? "Probably because Broadway management thought it was too – what's that terrible word? – dark. And also no chandeliers crashed to the floor."



The man who cried Woolf: 'I was a lousy novelist and not a great poet. I wasn't ready to be a playwright until I was 30'

Photo: John Lawrence



Revival of the fittest: Maggie Smith (left) in 'Three Tall Women'; Diana Rigg and David Suchet (right) in the Almeida's production of 'Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?'

Photos: Henrietta Butler/Sue Adler



EDWARD ALBEE: A WRITER'S LIFE BEGINS AT 30

1959 *The Zoo Story*: premiered in West Berlin.
1962 *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*: premiered on Broadway. Wins a Drama Critics Circle Award.
1966 *A Delicate Balance*: premiered on Broadway. Wins Albee his first Pulitzer Prize.
1975 *Seascape*: Wins Albee his second Pulitzer Prize.
1991 *Three Tall Women*: premiered in Vienna. Wins Albee his third Pulitzer Prize.
1998 *The Play About the Baby*: due to be premiered at London's Almeida Theatre in the author's 70th birthday year.

frightened. They move in with their best pals, on the shared assumption that they'd always be willing to return the compliment, only to trigger a nihilistic reassessment of the nature of friendship.

Albee swats away all my attempts to find a thematic link between *A Delicate Balance* and *Who's Afraid*. "George and Martha are about 20 years younger than the people in *A Delicate Balance*. The economic structure is different. The social structure is different. The education is different. It's all different." But what's ultimately the same is the bleak view of matrimony, which may or may not have something to do with his rather loveless upbringing as the adopted only child of a wealthy New York couple. (Albee has himself been in a relationship with another man for over 25 years.) The terror in *A Delicate Balance* goes unnamed.

but it is not confined to married heterosexuals. Albee says that "you become aware of it as soon as you realise you're going to die". When did he clock that one? "Quite young." Before or after 30? "Probably around that time. If you're aware of that, then you certainly know that you're supposed to live more fully."

At 30, when he realised he was going to die, Albee started to write performable plays. "I had written a three-act sex farce when I was 12. There were a couple of half-assed attempts at writing plays in my early 20s which I didn't finish. I was a lousy novelist and a not very good poet. I wasn't ready to be a playwright until I was 30." His first, *The Zoo Story*, was premiered in West Berlin in 1959 – Albee has never been out of fashion in Germany – in a double bill with Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape*. "There was no off-Broadway and no one wanted an hour-long grumpy play by an unknown American on Broadway." He laughs and says, "That is still the position."

He quit delivering telegrams for Western Union, and within three years had written *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* ensuring that, however unhip, he would never be unknown again. When John Steinbeck (the dedicatee of *A Delicate Balance*) was sent on a friendship mission to the Soviet Union in 1963, he insisted on taking Albee with him; he was thus in Poland when the President was assassinated. Some playwrights sit at their desk at home and let the grass grow under them. Not Albee, who is lucky enough to be able to write on planes. He has seen roughly 100 different productions of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* and he polices it and other texts with fatherly protectiveness. He withdrew the rights to a production in Mexico when he heard they'd shortened it. He obliged them to change the set on the recent Broadway production of *A Delicate Balance*. "It was Bauhaus. I looked at it and said 'It's absolutely perfect. There's only one trouble... What's that?' Those people couldn't live there." He made it fairly obvious that he "loathed" John Napier's design for the Almeida production of *Who's Afraid*. "There was so much fucking carpentry and machinery backstage. You couldn't cross the stage behind, and I thought that was terrible. There is a thing about British set design: it's always calling attention to itself. I hate sets that make psychological or symbolic comments."

Other things for which Albee struggles to put together two good words: "the stability of the critical group" (except when it likes his plays); audiences ("trained to want less, to be satisfied with less"); playwrights ("who go on writing plays who haven't got an idea in their head"). This last, of course, will never happen to Albee. "When I have no ideas for plays, I hope I'll have the sense not to try to write them." There is a play called *The Goat* lined up behind *The Play About the Baby*. But we'll not know how fashionable Albee has actually become until both these plays have been run past the critical group. And the audience. *'A Delicate Balance'* previews at the Theatre Royal, Haymarket, London SW1, from Wed 15 Oct (booking: 0171-930 8800)

INTERVIEW BY JASPER REES

a slough of commercial despondency. Not that he quite sees it that way. "All that time, a 10- or 12-year period when I wasn't ever put on in New York or London, I had lots of plays in the rest of Europe, around the United States, Latin America, just not New York City. But everybody in the

theatre in America thinks New York City is the centre of the universe." Whatever, the Almeida promptly caught the wave by reviving *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* in a staging so successful that, in a coals-to-Newcastle kind of way, it made it all the way to Broadway. Thus Albee now has two influential patrons in Britain: a small but perfectly formed fringe theatre, and the West End impresario Robert Fox. Their roles in the resurrection of his fortunes are in the process of being reversed. Having revived a hit from the 1960s, the Almeida will next year put on a brand-new play called *The Play About the Baby*. Fox, meanwhile, having earned his brownie points with a new Albee, now gets to revive *A Delicate Balance* in a production running Maggie Smith and *Tall Women's* director Anthony Page.

Premiered on Broadway in 1966, *A Delicate Balance* has not been performed in London since Peter Hall's RSC production in 1970. It won Albee the first of his three Pulitzer Prizes by ruthlessly holding up a mirror to the predominantly middle-class audiences who would have seen it (and, indeed, will see it in this new revival). It tells of a wealthy suburban couple, Agnes and Tobias, who enjoy a smoothly oiled marriage at odds with both the serial nuptials of their unstable only daughter Julia – who drops by in-between divorces – and the alcoholic depression of Agnes's live-in sister Claire. This ménage would function on a perfectly civil war footing were it not for the impromptu invasion of Agnes and Tobias's oldest friends Edna and Harry, who are sitting at home one Friday night and suddenly, for no explicable reason, get

Play it any way you like it except safe

Thelma Holt, producer,
chair of the Arts Council
Drama Panel and
recipient of a Laurence
Olivier Award for
Outstanding
Achievement in the
Theatre, recalls some of
her theatrical highlights

I have always believed in the right to fail – if you see a piece of work that does not work but you see that somebody has been very brave, I find that more pleasurable than playing safe.

Take my production of Ibsen's *A Doll's House*. Who would have thought that strapping Janet McTeer – six-foot-one-and-a-bit – could play that fluffy little bird? But Janet was so brave there was no way she could have been just "all right" in that play. She was either going to give a definitive performance – and I very rarely say that – or fail so miserably it would have been embarrassing. [As it was, McTeer won both an Olivier and a Tony award for her performance.]

The most dangerous thing I ever did was to take a huge financial risk when I left the Na-



Holt: a woman on the edge
photo: Tony Buckingham

tion. Since I had no investors, I mortgaged my home to do *The Three Sisters* with the Redgraves. Eventually, though, we were laughing all the way to the bank.

Another time, I brought the Rustaveli Theatre Company over from Georgia just four days after the Soviet Union had invaded Afghanistan. Each night there was a bomb threat, and we had to clear the theatre. It was some man from Stoke New-

ington, but he was terribly considerate because he always made the hoax at the same time. And every night two bus loads of police arrived to help evacuate the audience. On the last night, I asked if I could invite the police in for a drink with the company – something which was unheard of to the Georgians.

And when the Rustaveli left, the No 2 at New Scotland Yard gave me a badge to give them. They

just couldn't believe what it said – they couldn't take it home, let alone wear it. Because what the badge said was: "Help the police – beat yourself up."

It's nice to live on the edge, because there's a chance that you might go somewhere you've never been before – and neither has anybody else. It might be a very unpleasant place, and you'll want to come scurrying back as quickly as possible, but

danger makes my adrenaline flow. Maybe it's because never in my life has there not been some kind of turbulence. I was a little girl during the Second World War; while I was at Rada, there was Korea; and when I started to be a thinking creature, there was Vietnam.

But I was spoilt rotten as a child: my father died when I was very small, and I think my mother over-compensated. When I went to Rada, that was the first real world I ever saw: it had not occurred to me for one second that everywhere I went they weren't thrilled to have me. I came down thinking I was 24 carat gold, and soon found out that I wasn't. I'm not 9 carat, I'm 18. I'm right to be aware of my own worth because I can immediately recognise talent in others. If you don't have any skills, you can't recognise them in anyone else.

Thelma Holt's production of *Niigawara's Shintoku-Maru* is at the Barbican, London EC2 (0171-638 8891) from 15 to 18 Oct. Interview by Andrew G Marshall

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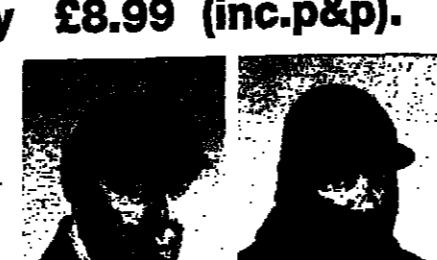
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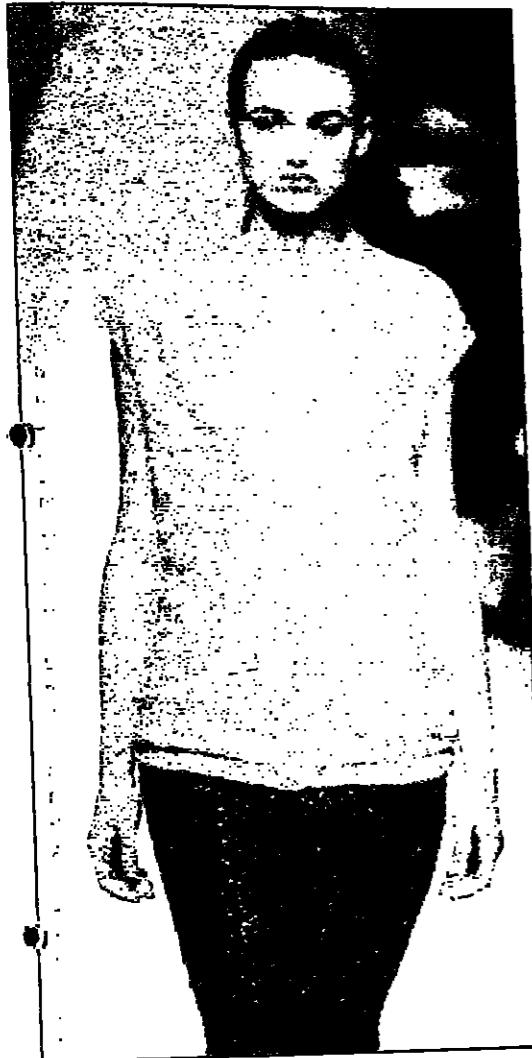
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Sheer gorgeousness – a first-timer conquers Milan

Narciso Rodriguez is the name and you probably haven't seen it before. He has been designing for Cerruti unseen (except by Sigourney Weaver, Clare Danes and the odd Kennedy wife). On Sunday he had his first show ever and it was a fashion moment to lift the spirits – nothing much to say about it except that the clothes were beautiful and wearable and they make women look sensational. Tamsin Blanchard met him on the morning after. Sensational he did not feel.



"I think my life began last night," says Narciso Rodriguez, slumped in an ornate gold armchair in the over-the-top Principe di Savoia, Milan's ritziest, most expensive hotel.

We had been scheduled to meet at 10.30am, 12 hours after his show. Not surprisingly, he shambles down from his room more than an hour late, bleary-eyed and shaky. "Champagne is a terrible thing," he complains. But he'd better get used to it. His life is going to be one long champagne flute from now on.

He had spent the night celebrating with his team, Massimo and Alberta Ferretti, who are manufacturing the line for him, and his parents, whom he flew over for the show and took to dinner at the Milanese fashion pack's favourite restaurant, Le Langhe. After that it was all back to the Principe to Demi Moore's presidential suite. ("It's got a swimming pool in the room," says Rodriguez in wide-eyed amazement. "The biggest hotel room I ever saw.")

Rodriguez is fabulous for one reason only – he makes clothes that make women look gorgeous. Until Sunday night there had never been a single dress or skirt bearing his name. His previous designs went under the label Cerruti. Before that, he worked for Calvin Klein, TSE – the American company specialising in modern cashmere – and Anne Klein when Donna Karan was the designer there. Donna has been supportive throughout, and now wishes him well as he makes the transition from designer to designer label. She, alone of her trade, sent him flowers to congratulate him on his debut collection.

"His show was a hit. Kate Moss said so, by ordering almost the entire collection; another model paid him his greatest compliment by simply saying, 'It's so nice to put on something sexy and classy. These are nice clothes.' To some designers, the word 'nice' would be the greatest insult. But to Rodriguez, a 36-year-old from New Jersey, the description is just perfect. He is not trying to challenge women, stun the world with his intellect or shock us with see-through underwear. All he wants is for women to look at his sequined slips and camisoles and sporty, luxurious separates on the rail, and want to wear them there and then. And if he achieves that, he is happy."

In the short time Rodriguez was at Cerruti, he worked wonders. Suddenly, after just two seasons Cerruti became talked about as a label to be seen in.

Then he made the wedding



Narciso (pronounced Nar-se-so) has touched a nerve with fashionable women coming of age in the late Nineties. He produces clothes that are clean, modern, luxurious, as ostentatious or understated as the wearer wants them to be. There are simple organza piqué dresses, little sequined vests to be worn under relaxed grey tailoring, pencil skirts, unassuming knits that feel precious to wear, and the dress that every woman should own.

Perhaps it was a little too much attention for his employers' liking. He was stealing the limelight from the Cerruti family. They parted company with him last March, and Rodriguez was out of a job. But not for long. Never ones to miss out on a hot young designer, LVMH, owners of Givenchy and Dior, offered him a job as design director at the Spanish leather company Loewe. And the powerful Italian manufacturing group Ermanno, which also works with Gaultier and Rifat Ozbek, contacted him to see if he was thinking of starting his own collection.

Just over six months later, photographers are climbing in through the windows, a woman faints outside, fights are breaking out by the catwalk, and Narciso gives birth to his own label. "It was the easiest, happiest collection I ever put together. I felt free," Narciso tells me, well into his second cappuccino. Fashion has got too intellectual. For me it's about excitement, happiness, emotion, travelling, wanting to wear clothes again." He designs for women with busy lives, what he calls "active, fashion-intelligent women".

"You don't have to put a cockatoo on a girl's head to make her look different. It's been so many years of disposable fashion. But the more ugly clothes there are, the more pretty clothes I'll sell. You can create a buzz without making a spectacle."

Right now, the buzz is deafening. Rodriguez cannot really go wrong. As he sits in the bar of the Principe, American magazine editors blow air kisses and tell him the collection was fabulous. By next season, they will all be wearing his clothes too. And then Narciso Rodriguez will be really happy.

Catwalk photographs, from Narciso Rodriguez' Sunday evening show in Milan, by Andrew Thomas

Celebrity photographs: Rex Features

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BELoved AND BONk

Diary of a divorce

It's the ramifications of it all that get to you. From the "who goes to sports day?" practicalities, to the fact that the kids take three hours to put to bed every night. That's because, in addition to the magnifying effect Beloved's departure has had on all normal problems (being put in goal for the match against Smallford Primary, having to eat Cheesy Wheel on Thursdays, not being allowed to have pierced ears, etc), there's all the wailing and moaning of "we want our Daddy" to be got through.

That's the only time I start to think really seriously vindictive thoughts, when I'm telling their crying little faces that Daddy still loves them. (Only, of course, not quite enough to actually be here in person. It's like being Jesus's representative on Earth when you've just converted to Judaism.) Bunny, my girl, said to me tonight: "I'll be scared to get married when I grow up." Whaddya say to something like that? "No, no, darling, I'm sure your marriage will be a beautiful thing that will last a lifetime", or "Don't be scared; just make sure you nail his balls to the floor six months before he turns 40".

One of the immediate practical ramifications is that when Beloved comes to fetch the kids I have to clear off, or I'd be holding on to his Armani turn-ups and begging him to return (or just stay for an hour and give me a light going over). And last week I cleared off to the coast to do a scuba-diving course, in an effort to become a New and Independent Woman (ie another bloody sad divorcee desperate for a lay).

About 50 per cent of the course was filling in insurance disclaimer forms to remove any responsibility from the diving school for my so much as breaking a nail whilst under their tuition. (I suspect Beloved has filled a similar type of form in triplicate somewhere along the line, removing from him any responsibility for anything at all in his life.) Anyway – one of the questions was "Next of Kin", in other words the name and contact details of the person who is the first to be rung up when my lifeless body is dragged from the water, when I have selflessly sacrificed myself to save 17 orphans and a celebrity dog from certain death. Do I fill in Beloved's name in this spot?

What would be more satisfying to my spirit, as it speeds away to another dimension (populated entirely by unspiritual incarnations of Nicholas Cage – you can tell how the hormone levels have gone, can't you? Week one it was Alan Rickman. Now it's Nicholas Cage), would it be more satisfying for him to find out from the full-page obituary a week later? Or to be phoned from the scene in time to rush to my still wet and neoprene-covered form and clutch me to his bosom in grief-stricken regret? Tricky.

I was having a "stuff off and die day" on that Saturday, a "plenty more sharks in the tank" day, so I left it blank to give me the middle option: track him down in 24 hours or so, so he has to come to the morgue, and he hates anything to do with hospitals, I mean. I spent the whole time while I was giving birth holding his hand and asking if he was OK. We even had to keep the radio going in the operating theatre to keep him from passing out. So one child was born to the theme from *Neighbours* and the other to a local radio news bulletin. You know the sort of thing. Local man passing by when something really important happened somewhere else.

Anyway, Saturday's "stuff off and die" mood didn't last, because the only other people on my course were a couple in the first throes of love's sweet dream. It wasn't a dive course they needed, more like the sort of surgery you do for Siamese twins. Thank God we were doing dive practice when we were in the pool – tanks, mask and regulator just prevented the *Kama Sutra* meets synchro-swimming. But only just. I didn't know where to look when they were doing the air-sharing exercise. I don't think the instructor noticed. Actually I think he's too young for sex. Although I did consider offering him a starter pack.

Seeing those two hot to trot in flippers made me start thinking about how cute Beloved used to look in the pool. (You can't really love a man, I always feel, unless you fancy him with his hair all soggy and water caught in his eyelashes.) So by Sunday night I was filling in the blank space with Beloved's new address: Beloved, Bonk's Basement, London. This provided perhaps the best option of all: the news is delivered to Bonk who has to break it to Beloved, and in that one moment of shock he looks at her face (which would be trying hard not to smile) and realises what a terrible mistake he has made. Yessss.

Stevie Morgan



Justin Worland, whose university existence kept him going when family life was rocked by his father's death

Photograph: Andrew Hasson

Just because they're campus kids doesn't mean the cord's been cut

As thousands of students begin university life, many parents are left wondering what to do with theirs. Up sticks, pursue ambitions, or get divorced? But such decisions can alienate children, writes Shelley Bovey. Just because they're away, doesn't mean the children should be excluded.

If you feel like backpacking around the world the moment you have seen your child safely ensconced in a university hall of residence, think again. While we have been liberated from the gradual descent into old age, which was all our own parents had to look forward to, the current exhortation to get a life when the children leave can blind parents to the fact that their newly launched offspring are far from being fully fledged adult birds.

An announcement that you are turning their childhood bedroom into an office, study or even a guest room can considerably undermine their security. But there is a tendency to assume that this will not affect children who have begun to make lives of their own.

Not so, says Mark Philippin, head of counselling services at Cambridge University. "This is not a good time for children to

lose their roots. They need to come home and find their bedroom is still there, and all the familiar things. Before parents do their own thing, they should think about what effect it will have on their children."

University is a time of transition between home and the outside world, referred to by psychologists as "the launching phase". The excitement and tension of the preparations for a child's departure can bring a sense of relief to parents when it all goes well, but there comes a point when they wonder what they are going to do with their

children. Two things kept Justin going: the loving support of his girlfriend and his flatmate, and his determination to do well. "Previously I'd been carefree and reckless. But when I saw my father struggling it made me buckle down." A good degree was Justin's tribute to the father who did not live to see it.

If a house move can shake a young person's sense of security, then the death of a parent rocks the foundations. Justin Worland was in his second year when his father was diagnosed as having testicular cancer, which quickly metastasised to his lungs and brain. He died five weeks before Justin's final.

"We'd had a very stable, happy family life," says Justin, who is an only child. "Suddenly all that was gone. My dad was dying and I couldn't lean on my mum because she was caring for him and she had more than enough to cope with." Justin fell torn in two. He wanted to be with his parents but couldn't help feeling a huge sense of relief when it was time to go back to university.

Another family moved when their daughter was away in India during a gap year. Although they allocated her a bedroom in the new house, she never felt it was home. The decision was a *sicut* accompi.

"Parents make changes for all sorts of reasons but students want home still to be home," Mr Philippin says. "They want to feel included in any decisions. Clare failed her first-year exams and left university for a job in a pub. Now, two years later, she is trying to put her life back together. She cannot shake off the feeling that she had been excluded from her parents' decisions and actions.

Children are vulnerable to divorce at any age, says Denise Knowles of Relate, "and addi-

tional stress is when they first go away. The changes they have to make are a big stress until they establish coping strategies." While there is no point in staying in an unhappy marriage, Ms Knowles believes that couples "should examine their timing, long and hard. And if the separation is inevitable, they must involve the children who did not live to see it.

Some things cannot be helped or avoided. Death is one; divorce may be another. Parents who stay together "for the sake of the children" often find their marriage coming apart when the children have gone. And they may assume that children who have left home can cope with their parents' separation. The truth is that they are likely to be devastated.

Clare Carter learnt of her parents' impending divorce during the Easter vacation of her first year at university. "I went home," she says, "and they sat there and told me they were splitting up. They said they'd known it was on the cards for a long time but they wanted to get me established. By the time they told me, the proceedings were already under way."

Clare had known for a while that there were tensions and rows and undercurrents, but nobody had mentioned divorce. She returned to university feeling betrayed and sidelined. It proved all too easy to turn to the escapism provided by drugs, alcohol, endless nights of clubbing and days spent asleep.

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Going to university is about more than acquiring a degree. It is a rite of passage during which young people establish an identity and a new role. Students do a great deal of growing up at university, especially in the first year. Parents need to be aware that for some time their fledglings will have a foot in both camps and though they may appear independent – indeed may not even come home for vacations – it is not until after graduation that they really strike out on their own. Whatever goes on at home in their absence, they need to be as much a part of it as they always were.

Shelley Bovey is the author of *The Empty Nest: When Children Leave Home*, published by Pandora-Harper Collins, at £8.99.

Shock! Men still aren't doing the housework! Well, neither am I...

Yet another report shows that men are still doing far less housework than women. Outrageous, says Ann Treneman, until she realises she doesn't spend 68 minutes a day cooking, 25 minutes doing the washing, 46 minutes shopping and 70 minutes cleaning either.

My family has clean genes. My grandfather, for instance, was very big on sweeping the street. "No, not clean enough," he would say while inspecting the concrete as kids lined up on the kerb with our brushes. My mother remembers this with actual affection as she wipes the kitchen counter for the 100th time that day. My sister's idea of a disaster is a dirty bowl left festering overnight in the sink.

So it really should not come as any surprise to discover that most women spend the most amazing amount of time slaving away in the home. But yesterday's report from the Office for National Statistics provided the usual shock to the system. I couldn't believe that every day we women spend an average of 68 minutes cooking,

86 minutes looking after children, 25 minutes doing the washing, 46 minutes shopping and 70 minutes cleaning.

After amazement came outrage because, of course, men do nothing like as much unpaid work. They spend a measly 28 minutes per day in the kitchen, 55 minutes looking after the kids, three minutes doing the washing, 26 minutes shopping and 43 minutes cleaning. "Typical!" I harrumph, sitting down to read the paper after "cooking" a breakfast of Fruity Loops (one minute to open the box, another minute to pour the milk).

This self-righteous glow lasted for a good period of time. It certainly lasted as the children made their own packed lunches and we all hunted through the overflow-

ing laundry basket for those missing pink ballet tights. I was not at all surprised that they remained elusive: the house is a study in chaos.

It is at this point that the glow started to fade and was replaced by guilt. Seventy minutes of cleaning per day! I probably don't put in that much per week, much less per day. And who spends 68 minutes cooking, for goodness sake? And all along, there I was thinking that other people bought Marks & Spencer convenience foods as well.

The very first feminist book I read had huge chunks devoted to the "tyranny of housework". It explained how we women have reacted to the invention of labour-saving devices through the ages by setting high-

er and higher standards of cleanliness. The result is that we spend more and more time trying to erase less and less dirt.

I thought about my mother's gleaming house and realised that male hegemony was reflected in every shining counter. The last thing I'd do would be to repeat the pattern the time had come to stop that endless cycle of vacuuming.

And I did. Cleaning was kept to a minimum. Ironing was declared the work of the devil. "You should be proud to be rumpled!" I exhorted the children. I took to collecting little sayings such as the (allegedly) Ethiopian proverb that says: "When spider webs unite, they can tie up a lion". At some point even I realised that things couldn't go on like this, and I hired

the first of many cleaners (they usually fire me). She comes once a week for three hours. The latest Mintel survey showed that our spending on domestic service has gone up a whopping 294 per cent in just 10 years, and so clearly, I'm showing much more restraint than most.

There is one area where I exceed the norm, however. Do women, even working women, really only spend 86 minutes a day looking after children, as the survey suggests? I spend hours and hours doing this. Of course, men only put in 55 minutes, I note. Something doesn't quite add up here, but at least I'm back to feeling amazed at how hard we women work in the home. I think I'll just put my feet up and ponder that a little longer.

A dazzling Sun headline, but the truth was in the small print



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NHS charges

Sir: The debate on health service charges can be expected to warm up as government departments move deeper into the spending estimates round.

Charges have been a small part of the NHS since it was founded. None the less they still form a very small part of NHS income (2.3 per cent in 1996). Increasing charges won't help cut waiting lists or fund pay increases for NHS staff.

They are not, however, imposed to raise money. Since the Marshall Plan in the 1940s, through the IMF in the 1960s to the present, they have had the two aims of impressing bankers with the Government's commitment to austerity and discouraging demand.

Charges aren't just a tax on the sick: they are particularly perverse one. They are generally levied on primary care: the cheapest, most cost-effective form of diagnosis and early intervention. Putting people off going to the GP, the dentist or the optician simply makes the crisis in hospitals even worse.

If the public want more and better health services, there are ways which would which require action on many levels: tackling poverty and poor housing; a coherent strategy for fluoridation of water; lifting the pressures which lead individuals to smoke, drink alcohol to excess and have poor diets; channelling pharmaceutical industry profits into the areas of research and education which the NHS prioritises; and tackling waste in the NHS, such as in supplies and computing.

JOHN EVERSLY
Senior Research Fellow
Public Policy Research Unit
Queen Mary and Westfield College
University of London

Sir: A large proportion of GP consultations end quickly with the doctor saying: "Well, I'm sure this is nothing serious and that it will clear up in a few days; but it doesn't don't hesitate to come and see me again." This is a very cheap way of using the doctor's knowledge and experience. Most patients do not need to come back; it is one of the reasons why the GP service gives such good value for money.

If you ask the patient to pay for this two-minute consultation, he will want a full physical ex-

amination, an X-ray, blood tests – the lot. As a retired GP, I am not in principle against the idea of charging people for the doctor's services; but if we are to go down that road, as the British Medical Association is now suggesting (report, 3 October), then the system will break down unless patients are given the option of a very cheap, or preferably free, two minutes with the doctor, which if it does not resolve the matter, can lead to a longer, more expensive, consultation.

Dr ROGER JAMES
Portsmouth, Hampshire

Sir: Polly Toynbee writes sharply as always ("As the season of suffering looms, doctors should be brought to account", 6 October) and in some cases she is on the button about doctors' influence on the finance of the NHS.

However, she gives the impression that doctors are lazy and interested only in financial or

other personal gain. Most doctors do work hard, often too hard to have time to adequately keep up with training and reading myriad journals, (a well-recognised problem) and high rates of suicide, alcoholism and divorce point to the effect their work on behalf of the NHS has on them. Swanning off to the Bahamas is unlikely to be contributing.

Interest in remuneration above the basic salary is understandable. A junior doctor on call overnight works for less than the cleaners in the hospital and a consultant's basic salary equates with that of an associate solicitor in a provincial legal firm. This reflects not only the fact that we work in the public sector, but also the failure of the last government to fulfil the pay review body's recommendations.

SIMON GRANT
Senior Registrar in Obstetrics and Gynaecology,
Birmingham Women's Hospital

I am very glad to welcome back our language expert Professor Wordsmith, who has agreed yet again to emerge from the saloon bar and answer your questions on the ever-fascinating English language.

All yours, Prof!

I am intrigued by the presence of a clothes shop in my local high street called Naf. Why would a shop want to call itself by such a name? We don't get shoe shops called Slipped or hairdressing salons called Unkempt, so why a clothes shop called Naf?

Professor Wordsmith writes: My understanding is that the Naf shops have an overseas origin, and wherever they come from, they probably didn't know the unfortunate conno-

tation of the word "naff" in English. They couldn't really change the name of the chain just to please the English, so they presumably decided to brazen it out.

It is interesting, incidentally, that the word "naff" is one of a select few slang words which are peculiar to England and unknown in America.

Are there many others?

Professor Wordsmith writes: I started making a list of them the other day, and I got as far as "dodgy, manky, naff, yucky, yonks, tacky, kinky, skive, stroppy, khazi, cash and bolshy". When something happened.

What happened?
Professor Wordsmith writes: I ran out of examples.

Oh, right. What's "cash", by the way?

Professor Wordsmith writes: It's the only way I can think of writing the abbreviation for "casual". By the way, I was going to say that the misfortune of calling a clothes shop something like Naf is not confined to overseas people. We British too have made some strange errors in trade names.

Such as?

Professor Wordsmith writes: There was a kind of lorry called Foden – may still be, for all I know – which didn't sell well in Portugal.

Why not?

Professor Wordsmith writes: Because "Foden" is a very rude word in Portuguese. Again, in German the word,

"mist" means "dung" or "shit", and I gather that Rolls-Royce had trouble selling quantities of their Silver Mist car over there. How the makers of Irish Mist get on, I do not know, but not well, I should imagine.

Next question, please!

We are often told by the intellectuals that rhyme is old-fashioned. But it seems to be a powerful popular instinct to use rhyme, in expressions like "pub grub", "nigbag", "razzle-dazzle" and so on. Why haven't the intellectuals noticed this?

Professor Wordsmith writes: Oh, no, it's a proper word all right, as long as it is used in front of an adjective, as in "his films were overtly violent".

Mr Wyatt's usage was incorrect, because he used it before a verb. The BBC is not what it was, I fear.

It certainly isn't. I noticed not

argument, someone is bound to say, "Oh, nature vs nurture". And it's a rare week that nobody says "descriptive, not prescriptive". What I am waiting for now is "Nature vs Nietzsche".

Mr Will Wyatt was quoted in this space yesterday as saying: "I hope we didn't overly suggest ...". Is this word "overly" a new one coined by the BBC, or is it

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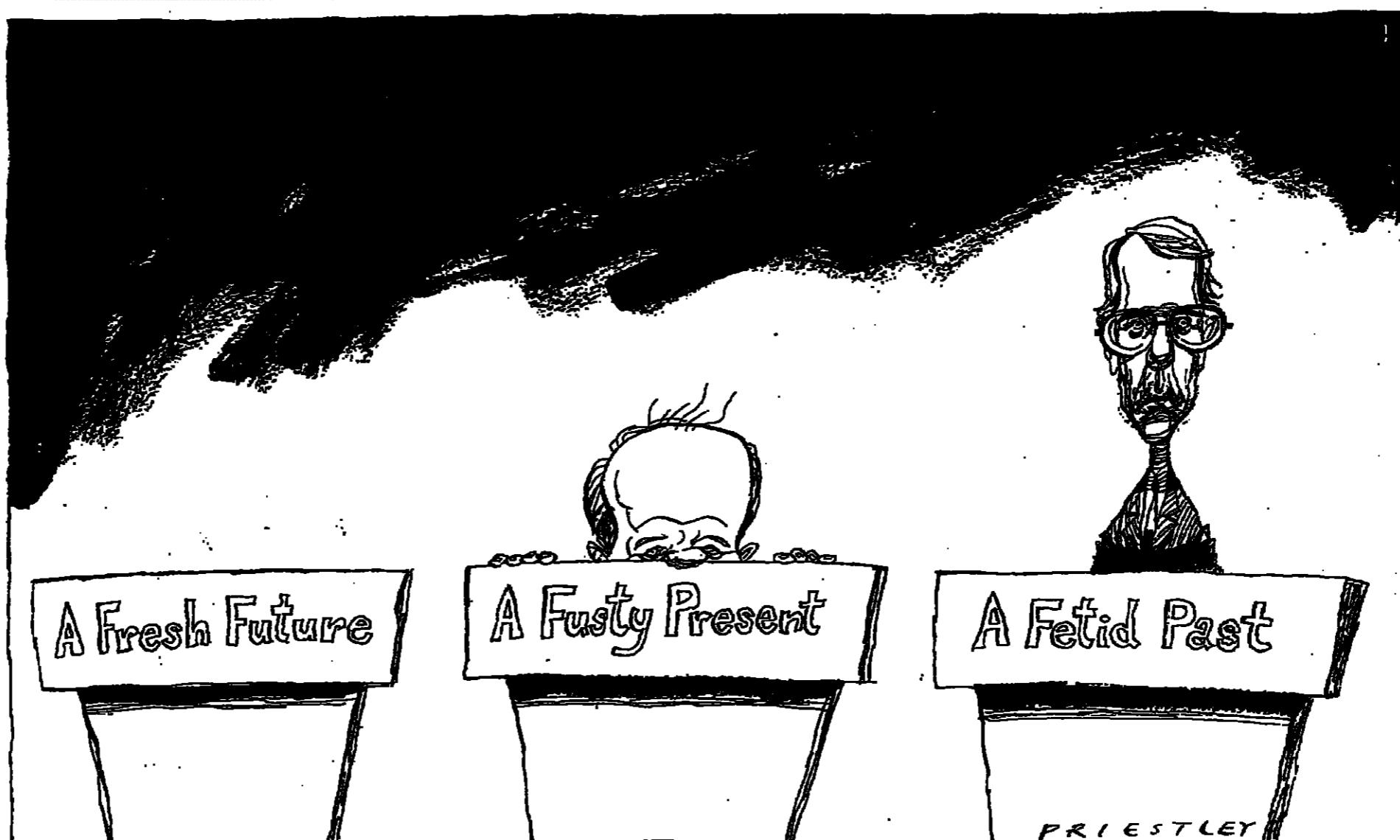
if it were "Roth's child". But the German origin is rot Schild, which means something like Red Shield. So we should really say "Rotchild" ...

Isn't this all incredibly pedantic?

Professor Wordsmith writes: Of course. Pedantry is my game. It is how I get my kicks, and also, I am glad to say, make my living. Incidentally, Dr Webster of Aberdeen, thank you for your letter, and my answer is that the word you are thinking of is not "out tray" but *outray*. Both are, of course, pronounced exactly the same in your part of the world.

Do you want to help Professor Wordsmith stay solvent? Then keep those queries rolling in!

LETTERS



First, there is clear legal authority that the trustees of established charity cannot properly disclaim an unconditional gift of cash unless they can make out a case that, by accepting the gift, they would in some way prejudice or compromise the achievement of their charitable purposes. An order of the Charity Commissioners or of the court would normally be required before an unconditional gift of cash could be disclaimed. The grounds for granting such an order might include the adverse effect acceptance of the gift would have on the charity's supporters and/or beneficiaries.

Secondly, it is not for the chief executive of any charity to decide whether or not a "substantial" donation of cash should be refused. This is a matter for the trustees.

MOIRA PROTANI
MARGARET LACEY
Charities Group,
S J Berwin & Co, Solicitors
London WC1

Nazis in Poland

Sir: In the photo caption accompanying your article "Church repents over wartime silence" (1 October), the writer refers to "Polish concentration camps". I believe that it means German concentration camps in Poland. This is not just a matter of semantics. We would not be happy if a wartime German camp in the Channel Islands was referred to as a "British camp".

MIKE HARRIS
London N10

A year to recycle

Sir: Sean Woods (Letters, 4 October) suggests that we should reset calendars to the year 1900 in order to defeat the computer industry's impending millennium doom. I propose an alternative: recycle the year 1999. The advantages of recycling are obvious: the millennium will not arrive until the computer industry is able to cure all its ills, the Government will be able to achieve all its year 2000 targets, the millennium dome will be completed in time and everyone will have sufficient opportunity to plan for the big event.

STUART BULL
Gainsborough,
Lincolnshire

Dodgy, manky, naff and yucky – the joys of the English language



MILES
KINGTON

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No, it's not a licence for dodgy scout-masters



ANDREW MARR
THE GAY AGE OF CONSENT

So, at least in civilian life, the last serious piece of legislation that treats homosexuality as a lesser, shameful expression of human love will be ditched. There will be a free vote; given the composition of the new Commons, it would be amazing if the age of consent isn't then lowered to 16. Liberals will celebrate. Conservatives will shudder, conjuring pictures of predatory older men invading suburbia and carrying off tousle-headed young men for a life of debauchery. I'm a liberal, but it is worth running through the hostile case in some detail.

Here, as I understand it, are the main arguments against changing the law. Homosexuality, through the "boy love" tradition, is more focused on youthful images: so boys require special protection. It may be one thing to get the law out of a relationship between two teenagers, but what about, you know, those dodgy scout-master types? Isn't youthful homosexuality a phase, something people mostly grow out of, unless they are "corrupted"? Is it really the case that, in our sex-obsessed society, it is a priority to legalise more of it?

There is one of those arguments I have some time for, but let's take them in order. There is a particular fascination with youth in gay culture, however inconvenient it is for liberals to admit it. Bits are presumably blantly paedophile - but the same is true of macho heterosexual life, with its "red-blooded" approval of schoolgirl fantasies. So are young men at particular risk in a way girls aren't? The evidence suggests that young men are sexually preyed on, by and large, where they are already in a position of weakness, where there is a power relation. That has been so throughout the century in boarding schools, prisons, children's homes, and on the streets. The answers lie in internal regulation, and a continuing war on homelessness and youth prostitution.

In ordinary life, 16-year-olds are more knowledgeable than previous generations, and no less tough. They are far likelier to know words like "abuse" and "paedophile" and are, in that sense, better protected already. Anyone trying to "lure" a youth into homosexual activity against their will is likely to end up with a split lip. The main defence of gay youths against older men is the same one used by all young people against mature suitors - that they find them unappealing. In the sex war, whatever your orientation, the young are more heavily armed.

What about the "just a phase" argument? Can people be caught by homosexual culture

while they are confused about their sexuality and then hustled into a life they wouldn't otherwise have chosen? This implies that there is such a strong gay culture that it can dazzle and hold people against their will. But surely the opposite is true. We are utterly surrounded by heterosexual images and stereotypes, from films to TV to the press, to advertising of all kinds. If people were "turned" straight or gay by the power of culture, there would be no homosexuals left at all. What scientific evidence we have is all the other way - sexuality is more about the brain's wiring than the lure of the exciting loft-apartment life led by chaps with other chaps in leather chaps and waterfall moustaches.

In the real world, families and parents will provide more than enough of a human barrier to thoughtlessly coming out, without the intervention of the law. And anyway, whenever the judicial process tries to lumber into intimate, consenting relations, it tends to be crude, blundering, and therefore cruel.

All of this said, and the case for the lowering of the age of consent established, does one lean back and applaud our sexual culture generally, for its maturity and common sense? No. Our culture has been over-sexualised. A balanced and mature culture would value friendship more than we do, and leave more admiring and conversational space for non-sexual relations of all kinds. It would be less goggle-eyed about genitalia and less litteringly obsessive about individuals' private lives.

A certain degree of privacy is essential to civilised existence. Yet health goody-goody, combined with the Oprah Winfrey-fiction of television, now classes everyone who hasn't an active and varied sex life as a sad human failure to be helped. Let me through, I'm a sexologist! It can only be a matter of time before the Department of Health issues advice on the right number of weekly orgasms and approved sexual positions.

Gay culture, assertive, garrulous, witty, pushing the boundaries, and carrying its own political agenda, has certainly been part of that post-Sixties, sort-of-Freudian sex campaign. It too has often been immature - though the triumphal celebration of promiscuous sex would probably have been in retreat by now even without AIDS.

The early campaigners for changes to the law and for a more open attitude to sex assumed that it would lead to a less stressful, more grown-up atmosphere. Has it? Not a chance. The sexual pressures are different but as great as ever. We have leapt straight from repression to exhibitionism. "Adult" on a magazine or book or video is a euphemism for porn. It is a good thing that people (mostly) aren't prosecuted for consensual private sex. But we seem to have become more open and tolerant - and yet more childish and prurient at the same time.

Maybe it's just a phase our country is going through, a time of juvenile "confusion" as we pass from legal and cultural repression to a calmer adulthood in the 2000s. Maybe we are still the children in the sweetshop. Certainly, there is some evidence that those cultures which were sexually liberated earlier, like Sweden and Denmark, are less infantile than we are today. Perhaps now, once this final act of decriminalisation has been carried through, we can all enjoy the ultimate sexual liberation - the freedom to treat what is ordinary and human as simply that.

Bring back the wolf, for a forest to last a thousand years



HAMISH
MCRAE
MILLENNIUM
PROJECTS

How many of the various millennium projects are really about the next millennium? Try this test. Next time you hear of any of these projects - the things that are going into that dome, for starters - ask whether there is likely to be even the faintest memory of it in 1,000 years' time.

Virtually all the ideas being put forward are projects for the next 30 or, at most, 100 years. Unlike our ancestors, who built the medieval cathedrals (or even the Victorian sewers) we are not used to thinking very long term. Modern democratic governments cannot think that way: financial markets and corporations are pushed to think more than five or 10 years ahead. Yet our generation has this once-in-a-thousand-years shot at doing things which might be truly memorable.

This thought came to me last weekend as I walked round Loch Affric, in the western Highlands of Scotland. Glen Affric is interesting because it has a fine remnant of the great Caledonian Forest, which once covered most of the north of Scotland, and has been reduced to less than 1 per cent of its original area. Glen Affric is also the core of a project, which will take 250 years to be completed, to reforest an area of nearly 1,000 square miles with the natural species, mainly Scots pine, that once covered the region. It is a genuine millennium project, in the sense of putting back a large area of land to something like the state it was in 1,000 years ago.

This is not just a question of planting trees; the aim is to recreate conditions where the forest can develop on its own. The destruction has largely been the result of over-grazing by deer, which means that the pines could not regenerate themselves. Deer numbers were once kept in check by the large mammals at the top of the food chain: wolves, of course, but also brown bears and



Hope for the future: Scots and Caledonian pines at Loch Affric

Photograph: John Paul

lynxes. When the large mammals were exterminated, deer numbers rose and the forest died. By the late Fifties only a few clumps of "grannies", trees several hundred years old, were left. Then the Forestry Commission fenced off an area of Glen Affric to keep most of the deer out. After a few years, young, naturally-generated Scots pines, children of the grannies, began to spring up. They didn't need to eliminate all the deer; just keeping the numbers down did the trick.

Since then, this work has been supplemented by Trees for Life, a small, volunteer organisation based at Findhorn near Inverness. It is working with a number of organisations, including Forest Enterprise, the Forestry Commission's environmental arm which now runs Affric, Scottish National Heritage, and the Millennium Forest for Scotland project, on its Big Idea. This is not just to re-create these 1,000 square miles, but also to link them with other areas of recreated native forest elsewhere in Scotland, eventually repopulating them with the large mammals that once lived there.

The idea of bringing back wild animals is not new: for example, the wolf has been reintroduced to Yellowstone Park in the US, and the Arabian oryx to Oman. There are obvious practical difficulties, quite aside from the fact that sheep farmers do not go a bundle on having their flocks eaten by wolves, and that stalkers would resent having fewer deer to shoot. The present area of available wilderness, even in Scotland, would not yet be big enough to support a genetically viable wolf population. That is why this is truly a project for the next millennium. But Trees for Life believes we could make a start by reintroducing the beaver right away, and since wolves are pretty adaptable creatures there could be the some selective introduction of wolves too.

The key point is that if you want a real, natural, self-sustaining forest you have to have the animals to maintain the natural balance. Bringing back to Scotland will to many people seem a ridiculous idea,

but in the long term, in a couple of hundred years, it may be a realistic prospect. We don't need to make that decision; we simply have to make a start in encouraging the environment to reverse some of the damage we have done.

But what is the point? I suppose my own interest in this particular idea comes from family stories of the exploits of a great-grandfather who grew up in the region. But re-creating the Caledonian Forest is just one example of the sort of Big Idea that needs to be re-

peated thousands of times across the globe if we are to ensure the future of generations to come.

Stand back a moment. During the last 1,000 years the number of human beings has risen from a couple of hundred million to 6 billion. It is rising at full bore at the moment, adding between 80 and 90 million people each year. The world's population will level out at perhaps 10 billion in another 50 or 100 years' time. We have no idea whether the world can support 10 billion people - maybe it can, maybe it can't. But we do know that unless humankind tries to care for the planet, its seas and forests, we will probably shift the odds against our own survival as a species and we will certainly make the earth a less varied and interesting place for future generations.

But to succeed means not just being better environmental citizens now; it means thinking very long term. It means thinking, for example, about the restoration of the Sahara. Remember that 2,000 years ago north Africa was the breadbasket of Europe. On a 300-year view it is plausible that the climatic change that led to the Sahara's desertification (and to

the collapse of north African grain production) could be reversed.

There are a host of other,

mainly environmental projects where it is obviously in the self-interest of humankind that a process of destruction is reversed: the drying-up of the Aral Sea; the loss of fish stocks off Newfoundland. The trouble is that we don't have the mechanisms to think about this sort of idea: the market cannot help as it is too short-term, governments are too self-serving, and most international organisations are too bureaucratic and politicised. So the really important millennium projects, the ones that really will be remembered in 1,000 years' time, will not, I suspect, in the main be "top-down". They will be bottom-up - projects envisaged by a few people with a big idea, such as the re-creation of the Caledonian Forest.

That just happens to be a British example of people coming together with a project that cannot possibly be completed in their lifetime. It is not even, in global terms, particularly important. But it is surely a prime example of the sort of thinking that needs to be multiplied many thousand-fold.



Does Ireland's destiny lie with a woman from the north?



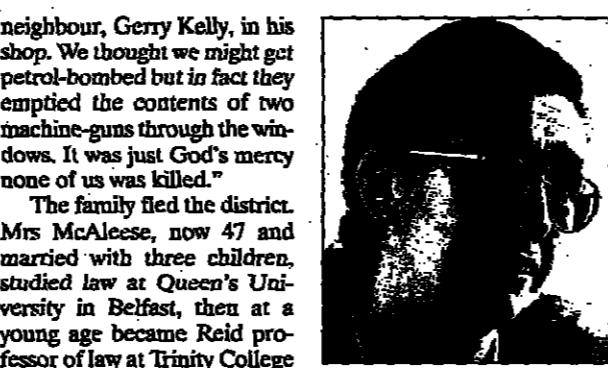
DAVID
MCKITTRICK
ON MARY
MCALEESE

With Mary Robinson now in Geneva as UN Commissioner for human rights, the clear favourite to succeed her as president of the Irish Republic is a woman whose Belfast home was once machine-gunned by loyalists. The Republic may be on the point of choosing, for the first time ever, a woman from the north to be its president. The election of Mary McAleese would signify that the south is in the process of losing some of its aversion towards the violent north.

Her election would not be popular with northern Unionists, for it would represent the most visible sign yet of the northern Catholic minority's power, abilities and potential. But it would be a landmark in symbolising both how much Unionism has lost and how far nationalists have advanced.

Mrs McAleese is a highly complex woman. Once strongly supportive of the Catholic church, she has more recently been a trenchant critic. A child of the Troubles, who comes from the once politically impotent Belfast ghetto Catholicism, she has risen to become one of the city's most influential women.

The shooting attack came when she was a teenager in Ardoyne, one of Belfast's most violent districts. She once recalled: "My brother, who is deaf, was very badly beaten by a bunch of thugs at our front door. Then they shot dead our



Contender: Mary McAleese

neighbour, Gerry Kelly, in his shop. We thought we might get petrol-bombed but in fact they emptied the contents of two machine-guns through the windows. It was just God's mercy none of us was killed."

The family fled the district. Mrs McAleese, now 47 and married with three children, studied law at Queen's University in Belfast, then at a young age became Reid professor of law at Trinity College in Dublin, succeeding Mary Robinson in the post. She went on to become a familiar face as a broadcaster with RTE in Dublin.

Her evident ability and articulacy held out the promise of a southern political career, but when she stood for Fianna Fail in 1987 she was defeated, and later that year she returned to academic life in the north. The job she took up, as director of the Institute of Legal Studies at Queen's University, was important for a number of reasons. The first was that Catholics, and Catholic women, were not normally appointed to such key posts; the second was that the candidate she defeated, the only other person on the short-list, was David Trimble, then a law lecturer, now leader of the Ulster Unionist party.

The fact that the job went to a nationalist woman rather than a Unionist man did not spark off huge publicity, but it sent shock waves through the Protestant establishment. A

It is a frightening prospect for them."

When the university ran into deep trouble over religious imbalances in its workforce it turned to Mrs McAleese, among others, to supervise a wide-ranging affirmative action programme.

Most of the inequities, and much of the old ethos, have now gone: "We've brought about seismic cultural change here," she later said.

Judging from her public utterances, seismic change was also the order of the day in her views on religious matters. Like so many Irish Catholics, she was outraged by the wave of scandals which swept through the church. Her personal attachment to her religion is as strong as ever, but in recent years she has been merciless in her criticism of her church's handling of child abuse cases. She denounced a "shabby, bleak procession of Pontius Pilate lookalikes, abusing priests, uninterested abbots, impotent cardinals and unempowered parents".

Yet another seismic change may be indicated by the fact that she is clear favourite, and is standing with the support of both parties in the south's governing coalition, Fianna Fail and the Progressive Democrats. Until now the southern electorate has been decidedly leery of northerners, with the conspicuous exception of John Hume. When Austin Currie, another northern nationalist,

unsuccessfully ran for the presidency in 1990, his party's research identified his northern background as the strongest negative element being held against him.

Mr Currie recently wrote that he understood why this should be: "The Provo murder campaign, Unionist intransigence, the 1974 Dublin-Monaghan bombings and the sense of continuing vulnerability, the cost in financial terms, the threat to jobs and tourism, northerners taking southern jobs, the fact that not all northerners are likeable people - is it surprising that some say to me they would like to see Northern Ireland towed to mid-Atlantic and sunk?"

So far at least Mrs McAleese's northern background is not being held against her, a sign perhaps that the ceasefire and the peace process have softened attitudes and made the south more welcoming towards northerners. Some observers predict that anti-northern feeling may yet well up, however, denying her victory.

If she wins, though, many Unionists may not be able to cope with the new breed of confident, articulate middle-class northern nationalists which she typifies. But southerners may finally be ready for a northerner, and one whose life has reflected so much of Ireland's recent eventful and often traumatic history.

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Inflation boosts benefits but brings no joy to the City

A higher headline rate of inflation last month means the state pension for a couple will climb above £100 a week for the first time next April. But Diane Coyle, Economics Editor, warns that this good news for pensioners is unlikely to please the Bank of England.

Retail price inflation climbed to 3.0 per cent in September, the month whose figure forms the basis for uprating a wide range of social security benefits from April. The figure, somewhat higher than the pundits expected, is good news for people receiving inflation-linked benefits like the state pension. Child benefit will also go up in line with prices.

The increase in headline inflation was due partly to higher mortgage payments. The underlying rate, which excludes these, declined to 2.7 per cent from 2.8 per cent in August and is likely to reach the Government's 2.5 per cent target before long.

Alistair Darling, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, said, ultra-cautiously, that the small fall in the target measure "provides further evidence that the economy is on course to get back on track".

However, economists in the City warned that the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee will still raise interest rates again. A few said they could even take action to slow the economy further after their meeting today and tomorrow.

"I'd put the probability of an

increase this week as high as one in three," said David Walton of investment bank Goldman Sachs. He said rising headline inflation would have a knock-on effect to pay settlements at a time when earnings were already picking up.

Most experts reckon the Bank will hold off until November to get further evidence. But, even though the Confederation of British Industry said yesterday's inflation figures showed there was no need to increase the cost of borrowing again, the general reaction in the City was one of disappointment.

Although higher housing costs and food prices explained most of the rise in the headline rate, from 3.5 per cent the previous month, the strong pound should be helping reduce inflation faster. Economists said retailers were taking the opportunity to raise their margins in the face of strong consumer demand.

For example, the price of foreign holidays was 3 per cent higher than a year earlier, despite the drop in overseas costs in sterling terms. Even household goods inflation, at a low 0.9 per cent, has stayed flat for four months despite falling import prices.

David Bloom of James Capel said: "Goods prices should be falling more rapidly with the pound so strong, and services inflation has started to climb again."

Not all the analysts were so gloomy. Simon Briscoe at Nikko Europe said the figures fully justified a policy of "wait and see" on interest rates. But he, too, admitted that rising services prices were a worry.

Some services saw pronounced jumps last month. Estate agents pushed up their

fees by 2 per cent, and other housing-related costs like conveyancing fees also rose.

Private school fees at the start of the autumn term also had a noticeable impact on inflation, although mainly because their weight in the Retail Price Index has doubled since last year. This reflects their increased share in expenditure by families.

What's more, the decline in the underlying rate of inflation was fully explained by the cut in VAT on domestic energy to 5 per cent announced in the Budget.

Big increases in excise duties that come into force in December will tend to push the rate back up.

The silver lining, at least for some, was the impact higher headline inflation has on many social security benefits.

The state pension for a couple will climb from £99.80 to £103.40. Child benefit is also to increase in line with prices, by 40 pence a week to £11.45 for the first child and by 30 pence a week to £9.30 for subsequent children.

The Department for Social Security said.

Some other benefits, including the disability living allowance, incapacity benefit, sickness benefit and the invalid care allowance will also increase by 3.6 per cent from April.

However, some benefits are linked to a figure for inflation excluding most housing costs. These - income support, the Jobseeker's Allowance, Family Credit, housing benefit, council tax benefit and the disability working allowance - will go up by only 2.4 per cent.

And the DSS confirmed that the Government is sticking to its heavily criticised decision to live with the reduction in one-parent benefit announced by the Conservatives.

This weekend's decisive game will only be shown live to



Helen Liddell, the Economic Secretary to the Treasury, with Stella Gardner, a home care officer from Poole, who has received thousands of pounds in redress for being mis-sold a personal pension by Abbey Life. Insurers yesterday claimed that they had cleared up 64 per cent of the 600,000 most urgent cases. A further 1.5 million people may be owed an average of £7,500 each.

Photograph: Philip Meech

More sport 'listings' may benefit terrestrial TV

Football matches such as next Saturday's World Cup qualifier between England and Italy could be shown live on terrestrial television under proposals floated by television executives and likely to be considered by the Government in the coming weeks.

Cathy Newman reports.

BSkyB subscribers, as it is not one of a range of "listed" sporting events which have to be shown on terrestrial television. However, senior television executives, who have been consulted by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) during its review of listed events, say the Government is considering suggestions that rights to events such as the World Cup should revert to terrestrial television if the England team reaches "decisive" - or qualifying - stages.

One senior television source, who has had conversations with the Government but declined to

name, said: "The Government thinks there's a problem with events that run over a long period of time such as the Olympics or the World Cup. If you list all of them, terrestrial broadcasters don't have the capacity to carry everything, but if you don't list any, when you get a big decisive match, terrestrial television doesn't get the games."

The DCMS has now finished consulting on which sporting events should be reserved for the BBC, ITV and Channel 4, and is soon to announce the formation of a working group to deliberate on

the subject. The group, which is to decide which sports should be protected by Christmas, will be made up of representatives from the media, sport and viewers' organisations.

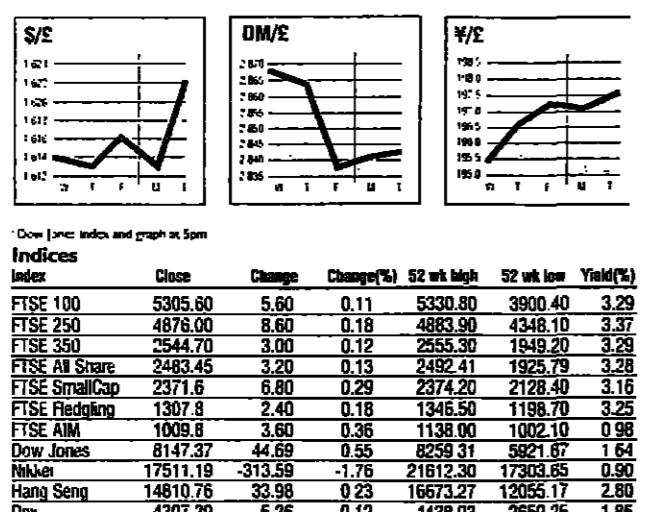
A DCMS spokesman said last night: "This is an industry idea that will no doubt be put to the working group when it's set up."

Listed events at the moment include cricket Test matches involving England, the Derby, the World Cup Finals, the FA Cup final, the Grand National, the Olympic Games, and the Wimbledon tennis championships. News that BSkyB's

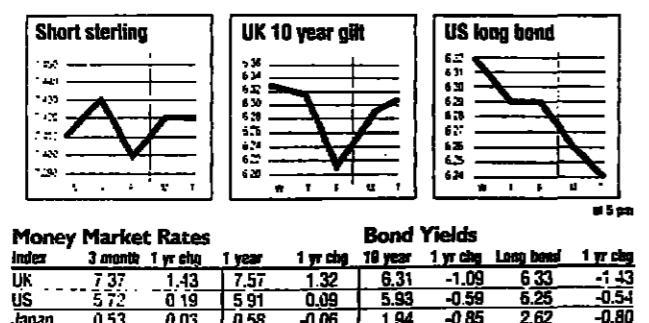
grip on key sports events may be loosened once the Government's review is completed, coincided with some bearish rumblings from News Corporation, owner of 40 per cent of the satellite broadcaster.

Rupert Murdoch, chairman of News Corp., sent BSkyB shares down as much as 8.5p to 457p at one stage after he said that the satellite broadcaster faced increased challenges over the next couple of years from cable operators. Speaking at News Corp.'s annual meeting in Adelaide, he said: "We see a flatish one to two years, but after that we see a brilliant future."

STOCK MARKETS



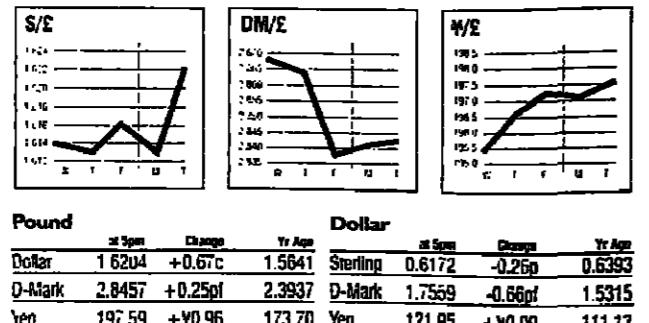
INTEREST RATES



MAIN PRICE CHANGES

Rises	Price Up	Chg. %	% Chg.	Falls	Price Up	Chg. %	% Chg.
Bectel Group	192.00	7.50	4.07	RJBL Mining	263.00	-15.00	-5.03
Hillsdown Hldgs	175.50	6.00	3.54	Rescan	323.00	-9.50	-2.85
Liberty Int'l	516.50	17.00	3.40	Racial Electronic	255.50	-7.00	-2.67
Great Port Est	263.50	8.50	3.33	Medeva	203.5	-5.5	-2.53

CURRENCIES



OTHER INDICATORS

* at 5pm	Date	Chg.	Yr Ago	Index	Chg.	Yr Ago	Next Day
Brent Oil (\$)	20.85	0.31	24.11	GDP	112.80	3.50	109.0
D-Mark	2.8457	+0.250	2.937	D-Mark	0.7559	-0.560	1.5315
Yen	197.59	+0.96	173.70	Yen	121.95	+0.09	111.73
Euro	100.50	+0.30	87.10	S index	104.90	-0.20	97.30

source: Bloomberg

Power regulator wants tougher curbs

Policyholders set for average £3,000 windfall

The electricity regulator yesterday called for tougher curbs on the industry and backed the idea of a single body to regulate both gas and power companies. The call came as he prepared to impose further price cuts worth up to £20 off the average bill. Michael Harrison reports.

Professor Stephen Littlechild, the director general of electricity supply, said there was an urgent need for new powers to protect customers and prevent electricity companies abusing their market power.

Among the proposals contained in his submission to the Government's review of utility regulation is a recommendation that the distribution and supply businesses of the regional electricity companies be split and put under separate ownership.

This would prevent the Regulator from cross-subsidising their supply businesses when competition for domestic customers is introduced next year. It would also enable individual supply businesses to be taken over or merged with those of other Regulators.

Professor Littlechild also

called for powers to strengthen transparency and accountability by, for instance, giving him the authority to publish information that the companies have so far withheld from the public domain on the grounds of commercial confidentiality.

His submission also supports the case for merging the gas and electricity regulators into one body. Professor Littlechild, whose £109,000-a-year contract expires in August, 1999, would not say, however, whether he would apply for the job of combined regulator.

Clare Spottiswoode, the gas industry regulator, also supports a merger and has indicated she may not stay on when her current term of office expires next April unless the Government makes a speedy decision.

Professor Littlechild does not rule himself out of the running but he does describe the post of dual regulator as an "onerous job" with a heavy workload.

His submission also comes down against the concept of profit-sharing between shareholders and customers, arguing that this would create uncertainty about future electricity price levels and would be open to manipulation by the power companies themselves.

Professor Littlechild also

rejects the idea of replacing individual regulators with regulatory commissions that hold their deliberations in public, saying it could slow the decision-making process.

The President of the Board of Trade, Margaret Beckett, is expected to publish a Green Paper sometime in the New Year setting out how she plans to reform utility regulation. The proposals will take account of responses to the current consultation exercise. The timing of the Green Paper

depends on the outcome of the consultation exercise. The timing of the Green Paper

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depends on the outcome of the consultation exercise.

Professor Littlechild believes that competition among suppliers will drive down the price at which supplies are bought from the big generators. At present generation accounts for 52 per cent of the average bill, distribution 29 per cent, supply 6 per cent and transmission 4 per cent.

Just over 1 billion shares will be created, with an estimated value of A\$10.37 or 470p each if they had been traded last month, the company said yesterday.

The shares will be listed on

the Australian and New Zealand stock exchange by the middle of next year, and it is widely expected the company will look for a listing in London as well in order to increase the marketability of the shares.

The 171,000 policyholders in the UK alone will benefit from windfalls worth at least £500m if the demutualisation goes ahead. They will receive information packs and voting forms through the post in the next few days with a deadline for postal votes of 18 November.

Mr Strong is to concentrate on marketing activities. WorldCom said his experience at British Airways, where he was marketing and operations director until his move to WorldCom, has built up a close working relationship.

It was also pointed out that Mr Strong had agreed to a 22 per cent cut in the price of BT's offer after the shock profits warning it issued in July, saying that the cost of breaking into the US local telephone market could be \$1bn more than expected.

Meanwhile, WorldCom con-

firmed it had appointed Liam Strong, the former chief executive of the Sears retail group, as chief executive of its international division.

BT sources were continuing to stress last night that while there was a large gap between the value of its offer and WorldCom's, BT and MCI has built up a close working relationship.

It was also pointed out that MCI had agreed to a 22 per cent cut in the price of BT's offer after the shock profits warning it issued in July, saying that the cost of breaking into the US local telephone market could be \$1bn more than expected.

Meanwhile, WorldCom con-

firmed it had appointed Liam Strong, the former chief executive of the Sears retail group, as chief executive of its international division.

Mr Strong left Sears in April with a £450,000 pay-off and an entitlement to additional compensation if he failed to secure a commensurate job within nine months.

Mr Strong is to concentrate on marketing activities. WorldCom said his experience at British Airways, where he was marketing and operations director until his move to WorldCom, has built up a close working relationship.

Meanwhile, WorldCom con-

Policyholders set for average £3,000 windfall

London Life or Australian Mutual Provident policyholders will receive average windfalls worth around £3,000 each in early January if AMP's 1.8m policyholders approve the change to a public company in a vote next month.

Clifford German reports.

Australian Mutual Provident the largest insurance company and fund manager in the Antipodes will become a quoted company with a market value in excess of £5bn next year if 75 per cent of the policyholders who cast a vote in next month's ballot vote in favour.

The company has yet to announce any firm plans to list the shares in London, or to provide a cheap dealing service to allow policyholders to cash their windfalls.

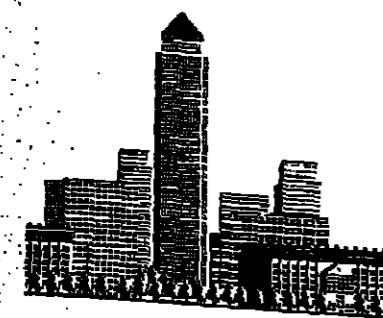
AMP is anxious to retain as many shareholders as possible in order to protect itself from possible bids, but experience with building society conversions suggests anything from 25 per cent to 40 per cent of UK holders wanted cash rather than shares. The proportion could be higher if the shares are not listed in London, and a cheap dealing service will be in great demand.

No new money is being raised but AMP, which tried unsuccessfully to take over Scottish Amicable this year, is expected to use its new financial muscle to push ahead with plans to expand its presence in the UK. A London listing for the shares is a logical step to retaining a substantial number of UK shareholders and to making a big acquisition in the UK.

Oates, will be present but will not take part in discussions about the WorldCom bid.

MCI sources said the 14-strong board was likely to instruct the company's executive management to continue evaluating the WorldCom offer, which is worth \$41.50 a share compared to BT's offer which values MCI at \$34 a share.

However, it was stressed that the review would not have any direct impact on MCI's existing agreement with BT. WorldCom has offered to bring BT into a three-way alliance should its bid succeed - an option some analysts believe BT



OUTLOOK ON PROSPECTS FOR BSKYB, INTEREST RATES AND GEC

No wonder Sam Chisholm, chief executive of BSkyB is leaving. Rupert Murdoch, with whom Mr Chisholm seems to have fallen out, was at it again yesterday, pontificating on the other side of the world about prospects for BSkyB as if it were a wholly owned subsidiary of News Corporation. In fact it is only 49 per cent owned by News Corp and is a FTSE 100 stock. If anyone should have been commenting publicly about prospects for the satellite broadcaster, it ought to have been Sky itself in the form of a statement from the board.

When Mr Chisholm started to think in this fashion, he rapidly found himself going the way of all those who quarrel with Mr Murdoch - out the door. It's a shame he didn't put up more of a fight. If nothing else, it would have made good copy. It probably also would have enhanced Sky's value for other shareholders too, for Mr Chisholm is undoubtedly a serious loss to Sky, and it is plainly very much in Sky's interests politically to be seen as independent of Mr Murdoch. Still, it was not to be and for the moment Sky remains Mr Murdoch's creature, bent towards whatever purpose the wider business empire is following.

As it happens, Mr Murdoch is probably right in what he said about Sky at the News Corp annual general meeting in Adelaide yesterday. The high costs of investing in digital satellite and sluggish growth in the subscriber base is going to lead to a "flattish" one to two years in profits. More contentious is his observation that after that Sky has a "brilliant" future

ahead of it. This seems to be based largely on the idea that Sky is able to extend its present near monopoly of subscription television into the potentially much more lucrative era of pay-per-view. On this basis, however, Mr Murdoch may be right. Attempts by the cable industry to challenge Sky's monopoly of sport and Hollywood have thus far met with only very limited success.

The only other potential competitor to Sky, digital terrestrial, has also largely been nubbed. Though Sky has been barred from equity participation in British Independent Broadcasting, it will be Sky sports and movie product that sustains the new platform for its first seven years of operation. The possibility that the European Commission would interfere and try to limit this agreement to say, just two years, has largely receded. Scarred off by the threat from BDB that digital terrestrial simply won't happen without the long term supply agreement with Sky, the Commission is unlikely to do anything more draconian than ban cross directorships.

For the foreseeable future, then, Sky seems to be sitting pretty, and despite Mr Chisholm's undeserved demise, it's medium term prospects do indeed look sensational. Eventually, of course, when digital terrestrial is up and running and the supply contract with Sky has run its course, BDB will become a head to head competitor for Sky. But all that is too far in the future to concern anyone much right now. If Pearson and other large outside shareholders in Sky are indeed planning

to sell their remaining shares, they are choosing the wrong moment for it.

Time for another hike in rates

What sort of flight path should the fledgling Monetary Policy Committee be opting for as it takes wing? So far it hasn't put a foot wrong. After raising interest rates in its first three months of independent operation, it then achieved a real coup by announcing a "pause" which took the steam out of the soaring pound.

Most commentators have assumed that holding rates steady for just September would not in itself constitute a pause worthy of the name. Therefore, they argue, the MPC will do nothing after its meeting this week either, but rather will wait until November, by which time what's happening in the economy should be clearer.

The Bank should spring a surprise on them. The latest inflation figures suggest as clearly as they can that retail margins are expanding in the heat of consumer demand. The strong pound should mean a slowdown in price rises on the high street, but this is not the picture.

Other forward indicators of inflation give cause for concern as well. There is no sign of the collapse in export growth via which the strong pound is supposed to cool the economy. Whatever measure you care to take - money growth, asset prices, the tight jobs market, pay awards - they

are all flashing amber. Price increases are not about to head off to the stratosphere. But the trends are not good enough to keep underlying inflation on target. The Monetary Policy Committee will only be doing its job properly if it delivers on the promise of small changes in interest rates early enough to avoid any danger of big increases later. With the fifth anniversary of Black Wednesday so fresh in our minds, this week is the time for a small increase to prove that Britain is capable of running a grown-up macroeconomic policy.

A break-up beckons for GEC

Today is the deadline Lord Simpson set himself three months ago for sorting out GEC's component parts. Unfortunately, there is unlikely to be any grand announcement from Stanhope Gate this morning, nor any puff of white smoke over Mayfair. Setting deadlines is usually a futile exercise, guaranteed to be all the more so when dependent on a lumbering giant like GEC being rolled into action.

So there will be no announcement today about the flotation of GEC Alsthom, the power engineering business that is jointly owned with Alcatel Alsthom. Nor will there be news of the "repositioning" of the telecoms joint venture GPT - a term which has generally been taken to mean the sale back to Siemens of GEC's 60 per cent stake. Nor will there be any news that GEC

Marconi has pulled off the grand restructuring of the European defence industry that will enable it to stand shoulder to shoulder with the likes of Raytheon, Lockheed Martin and Boeing of the US. Since Lord Simpson began his strategic review a year ago the sand has shifted considerably under GEC's feet. One interpretation of the "rationalise or die" remark made on Monday by the Defence Secretary George Robertson is that a merger of GEC Marconi and British Aerospace is back on the cards.

On the face of it, it would be remarkable if his opposite number at the Department of Trade and Industry, Mrs Blockley, took a similar view, since every consolidating merger that has passed her way so far has been packed off to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. BAe and Marconi might just be different, however. Defence procurement is not a competitive market in any true sense since there is by and large, only one customer and the Ministry of Defence can always call on the Americans if it wants to keep the bidding open. So a merger with BAe cannot be ruled out.

The effect would be to turn Lord Simpson's strategic review into the piece-meal dismantling of GEC. With GEC Alsthom, GPT and Marconi all packaged off, that would only leave Lord Simpson with a rump industrial electronics business to run. Even that might be demerged into two given that half of it is made up of discrete US businesses that could be separately floated. What a tawdry end that would be for Lord Weinstein's great creation.

BZW sale could be hindered by exodus

Fears were growing yesterday that Barclays will fail to retain key staff at BZW for long enough to finalise a satisfactory sale of the investment bank's equities and corporate finance arms. Tom Stevenson, Financial Editor, reports.

Morale at BZW has plummeted since last week's unexpected decision by Barclays to throw in the towel in investment banking and insiders are increasingly concerned that a flood of departures and the complexities of disaggregating the firm's divisions could make the business unsaleable.

Top executives at the treasury, fixed-income and corporate lending divisions of BZW are reported to be up in arms at the prospect of being folded into Barclays. They are angry that a policy of cross-fertilisation between equities, debt and fixed-income business has been abandoned and unhappy about being absorbed into the vastly different culture of a clearing bank.

JJB Sports plans to expand in the South

JJB Sports unveiled an ambitious expansion plan in the South yesterday as continued buoyant trading in branded sportswear helped the Wigan-based retailer report doubled half-time profits and a 50 per cent jump in the interim dividend.

David Whelan, founder and 26 per cent shareholder, said trading had remained strong in the second half so far, although at a lower level than the 18 per cent like-for-like sales growth achieved in the first six months.

He added: "We believe that our strong expansion programme and the continuing demand for branded sports related products will result in a very satisfactory outcome to the whole year."

JJB, which came to the market at the end of 1994 at an equivalent share price of 76p, closed yesterday at 504p, up 5p on the day and close to its all-time high.

During the six months to July, JJB opened 20 stores. It is moving towards larger superstores, which now account for 47 out of a total of 186. There are plans to open 25 more by the end of the year and 50 in 1998.

-Tom Stevenson
Investment column, page 26

Barclays has already approved a £25m expansion of BZW's £100m bonus pool in a bid to tie key staff into the firm with attractive "golden handcuffs", but questions are being raised about how effective these payments will be in retaining executives for any length of time. Many are understood to be planning to accept the payments but move on as soon as they can if they are unhappy with the identity of any buyer.

The maelstrom of rumour surrounding the firm is confirmation in the eyes of many observers of the dangers inherent in the decision by Martin Taylor, chief executive of Barclays, to put BZW up for sale without securing a buyer. He claimed at the time of the announcement that he had no choice, given the certainty that unravelling a complex organisation like a merchant bank would result in a leak of the planned sale.

Analysts said yesterday the danger facing Barclays is that it has to push the cost base of BZW so high to avoid large scale defections that would-be buyers are either given the whip hand in negotiations or put off altogether.

Confusion over the deal puts increasing pressure on Martin Taylor, who put BZW up for sale in part to satisfy demands from institutional shareholders to increase group returns, but may inadvertently have destroyed shareholder value by bunging the sale of the investment bank.

'Phoenix' directors are on the rise

Corporate theft and unauthorised insurance business is on the increase, according to the annual report from the DTI's Investigations and Enforcement Directorate published yesterday.

The DTI received a record 1,297 complaints against companies in the year to March 1997. The main type of alleged misconduct was theft, up from 143 complaints in 1995/96 to 187 last year, and alleged unauthorised conduct of insurance business, up from 26 complaints to 51.

Complaints over alleged fraudulent trading fell during the same period from 61 complaints to 51.

During the same period the London Stock Exchange referred 36 cases of insider dealing to the DTI for possible investigation, up from 28 cases the previous year.

The Directorate has repeatedly been attacked in the past by MPs and insolvency practitioners for being inadequately resourced, considering the huge number of rogue directors and fraudsters operating today. Earlier this year, Nigel Griffiths, the incoming Competition and Consumer Affairs Minister, made it a pri-

ority to stamp out "phoenix" directors, who go bust leaving creditors out of pocket, only to re-appear elsewhere under a different trading name.

The Directorate has worked alongside Companies House to tackle the problem of phoenix directors. A record total of 1,219 directors were disqualified in 1996/97. Of these, 1,040 unit directors were disqualified following the failure of their companies, while 179 were disqualified after being convicted of company related offences.

The DTI has wide powers to tackle corporate wrongdoing, and most of its investigations are carried out under the Companies Act. Last year the DTI launched 225 investigations involving 417 companies, and completed 221 investigations involving 408 companies. The figures for investigations launched were the highest ever.

Much of the DTI's work consists of sifting through the vast number of complaints it receives from the public, companies and insolvency practitioners, and deciding which can be successfully pursued.

Last year the Directorate considered in detail complaints into 1,297 companies.

-John Wilcock



Roger Paffard: Thorntons' new-broom chief executive is confident that the market will support his ambitious expansion plans

Photograph: PT

IN BRIEF

Marks & Spencer to open stores in Poland

Marks & Spencer is to open franchise stores in Poland as part of its continued international expansion. The retailer has chosen MSF Polska, based in Warsaw, as its franchise partner, and aims to open its first store in Warsaw by the end of 1998 and then develop a chain throughout the main cities. MSF Polska is a new company made up of four partners with industrial, construction and retail experience. They will operate the franchise throughout Poland. M&S, which has stores in 32 countries, said sales trends at new outlets in Germany, the Czech Republic and Hungary had shown growing acceptance of its brand.

Retailers unaffected by Net

Shopping on the Internet is unlikely to become a serious danger to mainstream retailers, according to a new report published today by Verdict Research. The survey of electronic shopping says that electronic sales accounted for 0.07 per cent of retail spending by UK customers. The figure is forecast to rise to £2bn by 2001, though this will only represent 1 per cent of all retail spending. Verdict says the Internet is not user-friendly enough for mass-market acceptance. It also says that UK retail sites on the World Wide Web is inferior to those offered by US retailers.

Brussels clamps down on aid

The European Commission is expected to start formal proceedings against Sweden today for resisting new strict European Union rules on aid to the car industry. The Commission is trying to clamp down on subsidies to the automobile sector, which it says has received 31.4bn ecus (£35bn) of public money in the last 20 years. Under new rules, to be implemented from 1 January 1998, EU governments will have to seek prior Commission approval for all subsidies to investment projects whose cost exceeds 50m ecus.

Wembley allocated £21.5m

Wembley, the leisure group which runs Wembley stadium, announced yesterday that the English Sports Council has allocated an initial £21.5m pounds towards funding a new English national stadium. The publicly quoted sports group, which runs the north London venue, said the allocation would be released at intervals.

BOC shares fall back

Shares in BOC Group fell back in late trading as hopes of the sale of its Ohmeda unit by the year end were dashed by the announcement that a shortlist of prospective buyers had only now been put together. The Ohmeda anaesthetics gases business was put up for sale in July, with a price between £500m and £1bn suggested.

Thorntons plans to double its size

Speaking after the company posted a 32 per cent rise in profits to £1.5m in the year to June, excluding a £21.7m restructuring provision in 1996, Mr Paffard said he was confident the market could support the group's expansion plans which include 80 new and re-sited shops this year.

Previous mistakes, which saw the opening of too many small outlets in hard-to-reach locations, would not be repeated, he said. A £22m restructuring plan has involved expanding floor space to an optimum 450 square feet, siting stores in prime locations such as malls and shopping centres and locating in small market towns where competition is limited.

Thorntons is conducting trials of four branded coffee shops in the UK and launched a mail order catalogue in August.

-Sameena Ahmad
Investment column, page 26



I've recently discovered a new way of giving to charity - new to me, anyway. It means all the causes you support can have extra money. It's the CharityCard. First you decide how much you want to give to charity. You pay that money into your own CharityCard account. Then the tax man adds more to it.

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CAF

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY SAMEENA AHMAD

Thorntons keeps investors sweet

Customers of Thorntons, the luxury chocolate company, are not the only ones getting fat from the appointment of turnaround man Roger Paffard as chief executive. Mr Paffard's whirlwind plans to add more than 200 bigger and better-placed sweetshops to its portfolio of 300 in the next five years will certainly feed the fantasies of chocoholics.

Shareholders will also be feeling pretty satisfied. Since Mr Paffard joined almost two years ago and embarked on a radical store restructuring programme, Thorntons' share price has revived from a 135p five-year low. Yesterday's 32 per cent jump in full-year profits to £11.5m lifted the share price 7.5p to 248.5p, a new high.

The restructuring to increase floor space and re-site shops in better locations is paying off so far. Refitted stores yield an average 12 per cent higher sales and turnover at re-sited shops is some 30 per cent better. Thorntons is achieving healthy like-for-like sales growth, up almost 13 per cent in the year and 7.5 per cent in the current quarter. Plans to expand the product range to include children's chocolates, a huge market neglected so far, and more emphasis on impulse buys like chocolate bars rather than seasonal gifts, make sense.

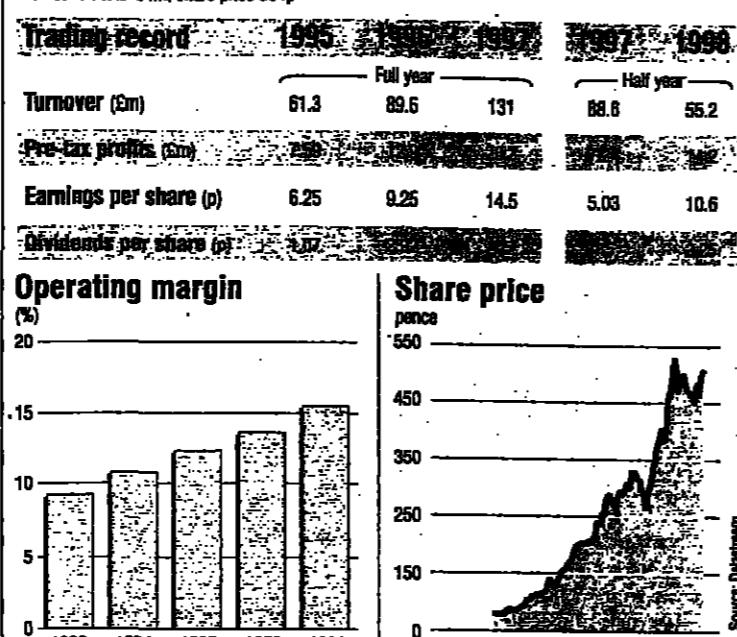
But there are three main worries. Firstly, margins. Opening more shops in prime sites will mean higher rents. A shift away from gifts to everyday chocolates and cheaper kiddie offerings will also squeeze returns. Then there are huge costs associated with expansion. Mr Paffard's plans to open 148 more stores by 2000 from his original target call for an extra £40m on already hefty capital expenditure, pushing gearing to an uncomfortable 75 per cent.

Plans to consolidate chocolate packing into one factory and outsource and automate will save costs. The company also has strong cash flow. But Mr Paffard's expectations of a one-point lift in net margins in four years' time look a tight target. His promises to wipe out gearing in four years also look demanding.

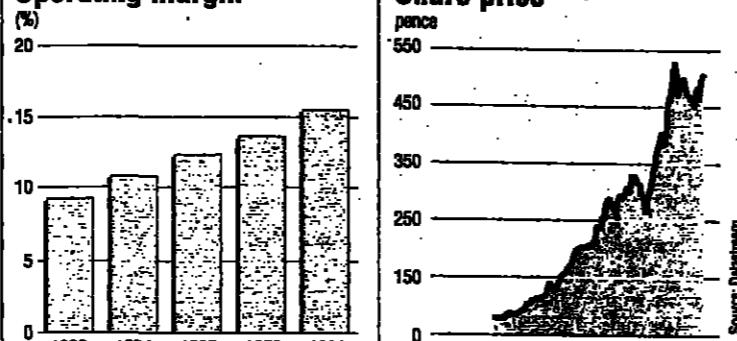
The second issue is chocolate consumption. Given the rate of expansion, any tailing off of demand or switch to a competitor would hurt. Mr Paffard is re-

JJB Sport: At a glance

Market value: £454m, share price 504p



Operating margin



assuring here, saying that chocolate consumption has grown steadily at around 3 per cent a year and may even be counter-cyclical - people buy chocolate to cheer them up during recession. He also points to the group's growing stronghold on the UK market, something that should deter competitors.

Finally, when Thorntons has finished coating the UK in sweet shops, where will it find growth? One idea being tested is Thornton coffee shops, but expect more news next year. Given the uncertainties, 20 times looks high enough.

JJB Sports keeps up the pace

JJB Sports, possibly the best managed of the specialist sports retailers to list in recent years, boasts an extraordinary record of earnings and share price growth. Over the past five years it has failed to grow earnings by more than 40 per cent just once.

Its share price has responded by rising in a more or less straight line from flotation at an equivalent of 76p in 1994 to yesterday's close of 504p, up 5p and

close to an all-time high. Interim figures yesterday unveiled an impressive doubling of pre-tax profits to £14.0m with sales 60 per cent ahead to £88.6m and earnings 110 per cent higher at 10.6p a share. Thanks to improving economies of scale as the chain is enlarged, JJB's return on sales improved from 13.1 per cent to 16.1 per cent.

JJB is rolling out its format, at an impressive lick, adding 26 stores over the past year to a total of 186 and starting its intention to open another 50 during 1998. Despite that demanding programme, the balance sheet remains unencumbered with net cash of £10.8m. Cash flow per share continues to run ahead of earnings, always a good sign that profits are real.

The explosion of sports shops has been one of the remarkable retailing phenomena of the 1990s and anyone who has ridden the share price rises of JJB and peers such as Blacks Leisure will worry that the good times cannot continue. Certainly, competition is mounting from the likes of the supermarkets and growth in demand must eventually revert to the trend of consumer spending as a whole.

The real problem with Cobham is not its growth prospects or even its increased gearing level. The company is simply over-rated. Forecasts put it on a prospective p/e of more than 22, too high for a business predicted to grow profits by 19 per cent this year. Now may be the time for shareholders to sell out.

That said, JJB's earnings are expected to grow by more than one-third both this year and next. So a prospective PE ratio of around 20 is not unduly expensive.

Cobham looks over-rated

Shareholders in acquisitive engineering company Cobham have had a good run for their money. With the exception of a slight hiccup in late 1996, when a downturn in the fortunes of its electronics subsidiary Westwind prompted a profits warning, Cobham has gone from strength to strength.

The group's share price has soared recently, rising from 550p in April to 847.5p up 1p yesterday, as the group posted a 20 per cent rise in half-year profits to June at £25m, beating expectations. The market was also cheered by news of Cobham's strong order book and a string of niche buys.

The year ahead for Cobham looks pretty solid. Its FR Aviation arm, which sells aircraft components, is currently refurbishing 21 Nimrod planes and looks set for more orders from the Ministry of Defence.

Demand is growing for its traditional flight refuelling services, including more business with the Singapore Air Force, and Chelton, which supplies radio antennae, looks set to benefit from the recent acquisition spree. Even problem child Westwind should have a good year, with a variety of innovations like low-cost scanners in the pipeline.

Cobham plans to splash some cash in the months to come. The group is budgeting for £15m-£20m of capital expenditure in the second half, most of which is earmarked for infrastructure improvements. Neither is the company ruling out further acquisitions. Gearing is expected to jump from 6.6 per cent to 40.5 per cent.

The real problem with Cobham is not its growth prospects or even its increased gearing level. The company is simply over-rated. Forecasts put it on a prospective p/e of more than 22, too high for a business predicted to grow profits by 19 per cent this year. Now may be the time for shareholders to sell out.

PEOPLE & BUSINESS

JOHN WILLCOCK



Fancy buying a flat next to Tory Central Office?

Richard Womack of property surveyors Hillier Parker has just sold the freehold of 32 Smith Square and its neighbour 67 Tufton Square to a couple of property development companies, who plan to convert the latter block from offices to flats. The Tories themselves will continue to enjoy the comforts of 32 Smith Square, which is let to them on a lease expiring in 2232 at a peppercorn rental. Next door, 67 Tufton Street is let to the Government and the Conservative Party on leases expiring in June 1999.

In due course Galliard Homes and London County Estates will send in the builders and convert the Tufton Street building into upmarket flats, just a few minutes' walk from the division bell in the House of Commons.

Mr Womack said: "The Conservatives could sell the lease to Smith Square if they wanted to and get a good price. It would make a fantastic residential development." It would also ease the party's cash crisis.

Mr Womack says the previous owners of the buildings, Royal and Sun Alliance Property Investments, put them up for sale in June, just a month after the election rout of their occupants.

Some genius at the Foreign Office has very undiplomatically set the next G8 economic summit in Birmingham for 16 May - the same day as the FA Cup Final. This has sent a shiver of panic through the ranks of the footie-mad Treasury. Fanatics for the Game of Two Halves include the Chancellor Gordon Brown (who supports Raith Rovers), his financial adviser Ed Balls (Norwich), Charlie Whelan (Spurs) - he was most upset at recent press reports that he was an Arsenal supporter, Treasury press spokesman Peter Curwen (Aston Villa), Tony Blair's spokesman Alastair Campbell (Burnley) and the Bank of England's Mervyn King (Aston Villa).

And then there are the foreign delegates, who may well be interested in watching the final rather than chewing the cud about interest rates. Not to mention the press. I suggest this potential disaster could be turned into a diplomatic

triumph simply by providing a coach from Birmingham to Wembley for the day. Just a thought.

City law firm Linklaters has binned the "& Paines" part of its title and gained a new logo, as it celebrates its move into plush refurbished offices at One Silk Street, next to the Barbican in London. Terence Kyle, managing partner, says relocating the firm's three London offices into one site marks a watershed in its history. The firm spent £55m on its new home for 1,700 head office staff. The new logo, by Saatchi & Saatchi Design, cost £130,000, and looks like two grand pianos viewed from above.

One Linklater partner who will not be making the move to Silk Street is Peter Langley, who is moving to Sidley & Austin, the American law firm. He will be helping Sidley & Austin to expand its intellectual property practice in Europe.

Thorntons, the chocolate makers, are launching a new range of themed chocolates and a whole string of new shops in Britain, according to Roger Paffard, chief executive.

Mr Paffard appears to be the man for the job. He's a former managing director of Staples, the office supply company, and was the brand manager in charge of the relaunch of Persil for Lever Brothers. He also revived the Clairol hair colour brand for Bristol Myers. Now he aims to double the size of Thorntons by the year 2000. The trouble is, he's run out of European themes for chocolates, so he has turned to Barry Callebaut, pastry chef at the Savoy, to come up with some more exotic ideas.

Step forward an American assortment, including Big Apple, Tumbleweed Whirl and Fudge Brownie Quarterback. Next is Caribbean and Latin American, and there are even plans for English chocolates branded as Earl Grey. Will they will taste of tea?

Mischon de Reya, solicitors to the late Diana, Princess of Wales, have received a writ from the family trust of Lord Palumbo, the Old Etonian property magnate who introduced the Princess to the firm. The writ was issued by Rgarth Investment Trust (RIT), which accuses its former legal advisers Mischon and Binders of breaching fiduciary duty.

According to *The Lawyer* magazine, Lord Palumbo's son James and daughter Annabella took part in the management of the trust's assets in the spring of 1995 following a settlement of a legal dispute with their father, in which they alleged that he had mis-handled the trust's assets, leading to hefty losses. Mischon and Binders stopped acting for RIT in May 1995.

The writ also contains a claim by the trustees, TWM Trustees, and one of the trust's companies, City Acre Property Investment Trust, against Lord Mischon and Sir Charles Farmer, the former senior partner of Farer & Co and former solicitor to the Queen.

The companies are claiming money allegedly paid to Lord Mischon and Sir Charles for a charitable trust in May 1989 for which they acted as trustees.

Financial sector heads for slowdown

The CBI yesterday published evidence of a slowdown in the financial services sector, with volumes of business growing at their slowest rate for 18 months. As Leo Paterson reports, these figures bolster the CBI's campaign for no change to interest rates.

The most recent CBI/Coopers & Lybrand financial services survey points to the conclusion that the sector has come off the boil. Though the level of business activity in financial services is still higher than normal, growth rates are starting to slow. Forty-six per cent of com-

panies reported increases in the volume of business in the last three months, but 20 per cent reported that business was down. Subtracting the laggards from the leaders gives a net total of 26 per cent, the headline figure used by the CBI to monitor business activity over time.

In June this figure was 40 per cent, up from 39 per cent in March. Yesterday's headline figure was the lowest since March 1996.

Securities traders were the biggest losers, with the rate of decline in business volumes over the last three months the largest since March 1995. A net total of 77 per cent of respondents said business was down between June and September. But this fall in business volumes follows strong growth in the

It was not all bad news, however, with business growth rates up for fund managers and insurers. Life insurance companies had a particularly good three months with business growing at its fastest rate since December 1996.

The CBI interprets this slowdown in financial services as part of a wider cooling off in the services sector. As a result, the CBI sees no need for the Monetary Policy Committee to raise interest rates this week, a move which would serve to dampen further demand in the services sector. Sudhir Junankar, the CBI's Associate Director of Economic Analysis, said that he would like to see "interest rates left on hold at the moment".

Spilt Drinks in liquidation

The controversial alcopop market received a further setback yesterday when news emerged that the Spilt Drinks Company has gone out of business. The collapse follows a recent statement by Bass that sales of its market-leading Hooper's Hooch, are falling.

Aptly named Spilt Drinks, based in Exeter, makes the Jammin range of Caribbean fruit crushes. Sales of the range were expected to grow from 15 million bottles in 1996 to 20 million this year. However, Spilt Drinks, which is part of the 21st Century Drunks group, has been forced to call in accountants Ernst & Young to put the company into voluntary liquidation. The level of liabilities should emerge when creditors and shareholders meet on 15 October to discover why the business failed.

The failure is further evidence of growing pressures on the alcopop market following a Government crackdown on labelling and the sales of the drinks to young people. Alcopops have been criticised for looking too much like soft drinks and so tempting children to drink under age. Bass is the market leader in the alcopop market.

COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Bloomsbury Publishing (I)	4.75m (4.40m)	357,000 (329,000)	4.27p (-4.27p)	0.7p
Boilerm (I)	151.1m (132.0m)	24.9m (20.8m)	18.2p (15.2p)	0.45p (0.55p)
Boutique Hotels (I)	5.07m (4.82m)	559,000 (416,000)	3.1p (3.5p)	0.6p
Braybrook Products (I)	32.7m (25.25m)	1.5m (2.25m)	1.1p (2.3p)	0.10p (0.15p)
James Hardie (F)	76.26m (77.95m)	7.7m (10.8m)	14.14p (22.51p)	0.65p
LBB Sports (I)	88.57m (55.18m)	14.23m (7.34m)	10.55p (5.03p)	2.25p (3.5p)
Lambert Smith Hampton (I)	15.53m (13.57m)	1.4m (0.2m)	5.4p (1.4p)	1.1p (nil)
MBB International (I)	54.85m (29.55m)	3.71m (2.17m)	12.1p (7.0p)	3p
John Monks (F)	77.77m (67.75m)	8.22m (4.51m)	16.65p (12.07p)	6.3p
Portex Energy (F)	24.65m (17.17m)	-38.92m (2.93m)	-11.8p (4.43p)	0.2p
William Sinclair (F)	55.23m (44.26m)	6.57m (6.33m)	10.5p (16.1p)	8.8p (8.0p)
Thorntons (F)	111.29m (97.57m)	11.54m (13.84m)	13.29p (8.70p)	5.35p (5.30p)
Walter Grindlays (I)	48.83m (51.45m)	4.52m (4.36m)	2.51p (2.45p)	1.3p (1.3p)
(F) - Final (I) - Interim		1 EPS is pre-exceptio		"Dividend to be paid as a PDI"

MJN 233M

The Ultimate Multimedia PC!

Take a closer look at our new MJN 233M EX system featuring Intel's highest performance Pentium® processor with MMX™ technology, massive 64Mb EDO RAM, fast 6.4Gb Ultra ATA hard disk and superb PC-TV system with Advanced Teletext.

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With other advanced features such as ATI Rage II+ DVD 3D graphics, Latest ATX PC97 motherboard, 24x CD and 56K modem, this system outperforms our Pentium® II processor based systems.</

ملاحة من الأصل

City glued to Pearson for news of television deal

MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN
STOCK
MARKET
REPORTER
OF THE YEAR

Pearson, the media group, enjoyed an old-fashioned romp as the stock market positioned itself for an investment presentation, expected to offer intriguing morsels about the ambitions of its chief executive, American Marjorie Scardino.

Its TV build up would appear to make its BSkyB involvement surplus to requirements.

If Pearson is planning to untangle itself from the satellite broadcaster Mr Murdoch is doing Mrs Scardino no favours.

For the second time he has warned that BSkyB's near-term future is far from exciting. His latest comments left the shares a shade lower at 464.5p; they were almost 700p last year.

Pearson has its detractors – stockbroker Panague Gordon is one – suggesting the shares should be sold.

The rest of the market had a roller-coaster session. Footsie lurched up to a 40.5 points gain and a 14.9 deficit. It ended 5.6 higher at 5,305.6 with New York offering a little comfort.

All American will be Pearson's third TV deal; four years ago it acquired Thames TV and then Grundy's the Australian group.

Ladbrokes had another canter, up 8p to 291.5p on US buying. P&O on hopes its cross-Channel Stena merger will be cleared by the regulatory authorities, rose 17.5p to 697.5p and British Aerospace climbed 40.5p to 1,792p on talk of continental deals as well as the perennial rumour of a General Electric Co bid.

BT, off 7p to 451.5p, was again hussled as arbitrageurs struggled to square their positions. Shell, another heavily traded blue chip, rose 20p to 483p as analysts returned from a Far Eastern visit.

Allied Domex, at one time up 21.5p, settled for an 8.5p gain at 493p. Its upcoming strategic review and talk about possible deals in the wake of the Grand Metropolitan/Guinness merger helped sentiment. There was also a story it could be casting its eye over

Greensills, the hotels and pubs chain which has failed to live up to expectations. Greensills, up 10p at one time, ended 4p higher at 376.5p in brisk trading. The shares were 633p last year.

Zeneca, 36.5p harder at 2,119p, was helped by expansion comments from Roche, the Swiss giant, and Cadbury Schweppes enjoyed talk of a

share buy-back, up 10p at 610p. Suggestions of a share buy back also boosted Hillsdown Holdings, up 6p at 175.5p.

Ahead of visits by analysts and fund managers Great Universal Stores added 14.5p to 718.5p and Marks & Spencer on rumoured UBS caution fell 16.5p to 647.5p. Orange, the mobile telephone group, was helped by investment meetings, ringing a 5p gain to 235.5p. But paper maker Ranken folded 9.5p to 323p after analytical encounters.

NSB Retail Systems, providing software for retailers, and SCEL, an education group, made scintillating debuts. NSB went from a 115p placing to 147.5p and SCEL from 245p to 268.5p.

Jarvis, the construction group, hardened 8p to 294.5p on talk of Railtrack orders; the privatised railway operator went to a 944p peak, up 25.5p, seemingly on property development hopes.

Tring International, a video group, firms to 6.5p after takeover talks were called off.

TAKING STOCK

Signt, the jewellery chain which used to be called Ratners, was the busiest traded share with Seac putting turnover at 192 million. It was unclear who had traded. One suggestion was institutional shareholders sold, perhaps undertaking tax efficient bed and breakfast operations. The revamped chain produced its first interim profits for seven years last month; there are hopes it will make £55m for the year.

Caverdale will be an intriguing vehicle following the sale of its garages for £25.5m. It intends to return £10m through a special dividend to shareholders which could be worth 4.5p a share in a PER. The rest of the proceeds will be used developing its accessories and industrial products operations. But until it reinvests it must be an attractive takeover target.

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Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling unless otherwise stated. The yield is the latest twelve months' declared gross dividend as a percentage of the share price. The p/e ratio is the share price divided by earnings per share, excluding extraordinary items but including exceptional.

Other details: Ex rights x Ex dividend; E emit/s; S suspended; P partly paid; NP nil paid; A/AH; G/G; Prices are Bloomberg Generic.

Source: Bloomberg

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(115p inc London EC2A 4PZ). 600p calls 50p per minute.

Stock volume: n/a trades: n/a

Gilt Index: n/a

Market Leaders: Top 20 volumes

Stocks are in descending order of volume traded. Volumes are in thousands.

Source: Bloomberg

FTSE 100 Index hour by hour

Open 5,300.0 Up 19.5 Up 31.5 Up 3.5 Close 5,305.6 Up 5.6

High 5,309.0 Up 19.5 Up 31.5 Up 3.5 Close 5,305.6 Down 2.7

Low 5,290.0 Up 19.5 Up 31.5 Up 3.5 Close 5,305.6 Up 5.6

Price Chg Yld P/E Code

High Low Stock Price Chg Yld P/E Code

Napp tests Levy Board's relish for the chase

The Levy Board is "allowing racing's life blood to drip away" according to a group which represents punters. Greg Wood hears how negligence could also allow rogue bookmakers to operate unchecked.

When someone sends you a bill for £9,567.82, most people would expect a little urgency on the part of whoever is doing the asking. A gentle reminder to start with, perhaps followed swiftly by a series of letters carrying an escalating degree of threat. The Levy Board, however,

ever, does not seem to operate like that.

This, for those who glaze at the mention of racing politics, is the statutory body charged with collecting Levy payments from Britain's bookmakers, who in turn take the money from punters as a portion of the nine per cent "tax" charged on off-course bets. According to the National Association for the Protection of Punters, though, the Board is failing in its duty to collect the Levy, and they believe it has evidence to prove it.

Exhibit A is a betting permit obtained by NAPP's treasurer, Andrew Grcock, in July 1996. This in itself is a striking demonstration of how easy it is

to obtain a bookmaking licence – which was precisely his intention – since at the time of his application, Grcock had a little less than £500 in his bank account. The magistrate due to assess his application went missing and his permit was simply popped in the post, as was a replacement when it came up for annual renewal.

Exhibit B is an almost empty folder, which should, you might think, by now contain several dozen letters from the Levy Board enquiring why someone who has held a betting permit for the last 15 months has not paid a penny in Levy in all that time. The first hint of any interest from the Board

RICHARD EDMONDSON
NAPP: Speedball
(York 3.30)
NBP: Mon Bruce
(York 3.00)

came in March, eight months after the licence was issued, with a request to fill out the relevant forms. This was ignored. Four months later, a bill finally arrived, for £9,567.82, since the Board had estimated Gro-

nored, and nothing has been heard of it since. Instead, a further assessment arrived yesterday morning, for the 37th year of the Levy scheme. The previous bill was for year 35. There has never been any mention of the £10,000 or so which should presumably be due for the year in between.

In fact, NAPP owes nothing, because it has not been taking bets. The Levy Board, however, does not know this, and its procedures therefore appear sloppy, to say the least. "This is evidence that off-course bookmakers are being allowed to trade for well over a year, and perhaps indefinitely, without the need to make any payments

to the Levy Board, while continuing to collect the money from punters' bets," Michael Singer, NAPP's chairman, said. "If we had been a rogue bookmaker, or simply gone bust, either way the Levy Board would not have received payment."

The Board thus stands accused of failing in its duty not just to racing, but also to punters. In the past year alone, three bookmakers have gone bust owing large sums to their customers and to the Levy Board. On reflection, then, Rodney Brack, the Board's chief executive, may wish he had not traded a paper recently that Customs and Excise could do more to monitor bookmakers

HOCKEY

Australians to take key England posts

The long awaited news from the English Hockey Association on the appointment of a performance director and the new England men's coach is yet to break. Yesterday it was still "no comment", although it is common knowledge in Australia that two of their leading coaches are moving to England.

Chris Spice, formerly assistant coach to Ric Charlesworth and the Australian Women's Olympic gold medal winning squad, has been selected for the performance director post, which will cover both men and women, and Barry Dancer for the men's job.

Dancer, a former Australian international left-half, was coach to the Australian Under-21 side which took gold 10 days ago in the World Junior Cup at Milton Keynes.

David Whittle, the England manager, said yesterday that he was unable to confirm the appointments, but if they were correct he welcomed the news.

"With the World Cup just six months away, it is vital to get the coach in post. We have already lost too much time. I hope he will be able to come with us to Cairo at the end of the month for the Six Nations Tournament and be able to make his own assessment of our players," Whittle said.

"We have some good English coaches, but Spice and Dancer are professionals and if their appointments go ahead it will be wonderful news for English hockey."

Tammy Miller, the Clifton captain, has been recalled to the England women's squad for two training matches against Germany in Cologne on 18 to 19 October. Miller retired after the Atlanta Olympics, but has decided to return. Maggie Sonyave, the England coach, has named seven Olympians including Karen Brown, the world's most-capped player.

ENGLAND SQUAD: M. Cawton, J. Emerton, T. Callen, C. Redfearn, L. King, L. Young (coach), S. Blanks, K. Bowden, C. Voss (assistant coach), S. Hodge, S. Morris, K. Brown, L. Copeland, M. Michelle, J. Smith (physio), G. Moore, J. Stansfield (squad doctor), H. Rose (Univ of Nottingham).

– Bill Calvert

Embassy joins the Godolphin exodus to the desert

The Newmarket trainer David Loder was dealt a huge blow yesterday when his leading 1,000 Guineas contender Embassy and top miler Starborough were among 12 horses transferred by Sheikh Mo-

hammed to his Godolphin operation. The pair will spend the winter in Dubai before returning to Europe to race under the guidance of the Godolphin trainer, Saeed bin Suroor.

John Gosden and Michael

Stoute also suffer, losing three each as Godolphin strengthens next year's team. Gosden loses Cape Cross, Conon Falls and King Sound, while Bint Al-hadaya, Crown Of Light and Kayf Tara leave Stoute.

Again, the demand was ig-

neant in four parts. Just Bob has the penalty this time, so Mon Bruce can overtake that lengthened 96, beaten by 1.5 lengths. The Sandown winner Sweet Maple can reverse Godolphin form with Beau Ventura on 56bets. He has a favourable draw, as has Weston's Well, with Kristen Fallon having a rate role for the in-form Mac Eastbury, Shireland Dreams, running in blinder for the first time, does well in the board and is 2nd to 6th. Two lengths give him every chance in the 100bets, with the 100bets 2nd to 3rd. The 100bets 3rd to 4th in second to Diamond Art at Newmarket last week and appears much more than his colleague Pointer. Caravane Heart won her last year and has a chance back over 100bets after two runs over 100bets.

Selection: MON BRUCE

GOING: Good.
STALLS: 51, 61 & 71 stands round; course made.
DRAW ADVANTAGE: None.
• COURSE: Flat and open country. Flat and ideal for the powerful gallop.
• LEADING TRAINERS: M Stoute (10) from 107 (77%); J Dunlop (98) from 100 (80%); R Harrison (17) from 100 (80%).
• LEADERS: 100bets (10) from 201 (44%); K Darley (20) from 199 (42%); K Fallon (19) from 167 (44%).
• FAVOURITES: 200bets (20) in 56bets (35%).
• BLINKERED FIRST TIME: Smyrnford Dream (200); Happy Minaret (420).
BETTING: 1-1 Special Tract, 5-1 Embassy, 5-1 Diamond Art, 12-1 Prompt Delivery, 14-1 others.

2,000 EQUITY FINANCIAL COLLECTIONS NURSERY HANDICAP (CLASS C) £2,000 added 2YO 6f Penitury Value £9,716

1 3240 LIDO (9) (D) (Say) Penitury 9.7
2 3320 STRANBROOK (19) (D) Diamond Racing 10.0
3 2230 TELLULAH BELLE (4) Billy Bushwacker 9.6
3 3000 Kram (5) 5000 Asyada (nb)
3 3300 SHAWM (nap)

GOING: Good.
STALLS: 51, 61 & 71 stands round; course made.
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Christian Dailly relaxes at Derby County's Pride Park stadium where his consistent appearances in defence have helped his Scotland career

Photograph: Peter Jay

Daily grind can bring World Cup reward

Christian Dailly may enjoy rock festivals but, as Phil Shaw discovered, next summer he would rather get his fix of that special atmosphere created by crowds of fans singing and swaying, by playing in front of Scotland's Tartan Army at the World Cup finals.

Footballers, according to the stereotype, holiday in Ibiza and regard Elton John as the adventurous end of a musical spectrum that starts with "Lady in Red". Outmoded and unfair as the image may be, Christian Dailly still stands out as an oddball.

As his contemporaries jetted off to Florida or the Caribbean at the end of an arduous season, Derby County's Scottish defender also headed west. Where he was bound, however, there were no rounds of cocktails or golf, no sunbeds and no sun. Dailly's idea of getting away

from it all was to stand in a farmer's rain-lashed field in Somerset for three days having his bones assaulted.

This year's Glastonbury rock festival took place in what he describes as "knee-high mud". Conditions were so bad that his brother and the two friends with whom they attended were taking half an hour to wade from one stage to another. Dailly, having played on the treacherous morass that was the Baseball Ground, jokes that he needed only five minutes to move between gigs.

His summing up of the festival ritual - "watch bands all day, lie in the tent at night" - confirms him as, well, different (though he is considered a good mixer rather than an outsider in the Graeme Le Saux mould). Surely, I suggest, a highly paid sportsman would prefer his creature comforts? "A hotel?" Dailly gasps mortified. "No way! I'd never do that."

The side of Dailly that reveres Oasis and The Verve would love to return to "Glasto" next summer: he even pre-

sented one of his Scotland jerseys to John Squire, late of his beloved Stone Roses and now playing up front with The Sea-Horses.

Yet his professional and patriotic side fervently hopes he will have a prior engagement, a four-yearly festival which also commands large crowds of singing, swaying people: the World Cup finals.

Barring freak results, Scotland will book their passage to France if they beat Latvia in Glasgow on Saturday. Dailly, who is in line for his fifth cap, reflects the cautious optimism that characterises Craig Brown's meticulous style of management.

Belarus were a decent side with a lot of guys who play for top Russian clubs," Dailly said. "Latvia are above them so we expect a tough match. But Craig will do his usual thorough briefing on their tactics and players. And if someone had said at the start of the campaign that we'd qualify if we beat Latvia at home, we'd have scolded for that."

The catalyst in Dailly's breakthrough was a £1m transfer to Derby 16 months ago. Out of contract, he had talks with PSV Eindhoven, Cagliari, Celta

Vigo, Coventry and Manchester City before a combination of Jim Smith's plans for him and a desire to inflict minimal upheaval on his young family led him to the East Midlands.

"It was the best thing all round, because United also got some money they wouldn't have had if I'd gone abroad under the Bosman ruling. I ended up making more appearances than anyone at the club, and if you're doing well in the Premiership you're bound to be noticed. Craig invited me to a winter get-together for his Anglo-Scots and told me then I hadn't been forgotten."

The fact that Smith gave him a settled role furthered Dailly's international ambitions. At Tannadice he played "right-back one week, left wing the next, then centre-forward and after that centre-half". He feared he was becoming more than useful in several positions but excelling in none.

"Sometimes you need a move to develop. There's a few who've come from United and established themselves in Eng-

land - Kevin Gallacher, Duncan Ferguson and Billy McKinlay spring to mind - which tells you something about the coaching we received there."

Derby's squad is as cosmopolitan as they come, containing Danes, Dutchmen, Indians, Croats, Estonians, Costa Ricans and even the odd Englishman. But, explains Dailly, the treadmill of domestic fixtures allows little time for dwelling on the prospects for France '98 except when a player returns from some far-flung match, as Jamaica's Deon Burton did on Monday.

Pride Park's solitary Scot-cum-member of the Woodstock nation will be excused for making sure everyone hears about it if Latvia are vanquished. As part of a younger generation that Brown has been easing into place, Dailly may have the opportunity to play in other World Cups. But the sound of Celtic Park proclaiming Scotland's advance would be music to his ears; as Oasis might have said, he is mud for it.

Earle keen to show that England's loss is Jamaica's gain

After waiting for a call from Glenn Hoddle which never came, Robbie Earle turned his attention elsewhere and now looks to be heading for the World Cup finals. John Carlin talked to him in Washington.

Washington. But, generally, where his Jamaican teammates were coltishly exuberant, he was quiet and restrained - a gently spoken philosopher-footballer who keeps his head while all around are going bananas.

Not entirely unlike the role he plays with the Crazy Gang, which is one reason why the transition from Wimbledon to Jamaica had proved, he said, something of a home from home.

"There are similarities in that it's a small nation, we're a small club. There's a lot of team spirit and camaraderie, which is similar to Wimbledon. Jamaica's a smaller nation trying to get a bigger identity and that's something I've known since I've been at Wimbledon. So it's been quite an even transition, to be honest."

He was being honest because at that very instant one of his team-mates, a wild-eyed Vinny Jones type, walked behind him and gave him a gratuitous shove in the back. Without batting an eyelid, without any visible break in his thought process, it only showing perhaps a flicker of smile, he kept talking.

"I thought it might be slightly more difficult, but they've taken to us well. The results have gone quite well. We hope we've added something to the squad. Maybe a little bit of experience, a little bit of professionalism."

The "we" refers to himself and three other England-based players in the Jamaican squad: Fitzroy Simpson and Paul Hall of Portsmouth, and Deon Burton of Derby County, who has scored the decisive goals in Jamaica's last three World Cup outings.

Earle came on as a substitute in two 1-0 victories over Canada and Costa Rica last month and hopes to be fit for what promises to be a huge game against El Salvador on 9 November.

The question was whether Earle, a Jamaican for barely three months, had acquired any genuine stirrings of national pride. "You do get a sense of pride," he said. "Obviously I'm English, I checked myself just in time, betraying his obviously ambiguous feelings, before continuing."

"I was born in England, so my first choice would have been England. I'm not going to deny that. But you do feel a sense of pride and a sense of trying to create a little bit of history for a country. It's almost like being able to put something back in a nation that wouldn't get this kind of attention otherwise."

From someone else that "putting something back" stuff might have sounded corny. From Robbie Earle's lips, it sounded totally sincere. If, in the autumn of his footballing years, he wins his shot at glory in France next year, it couldn't happen to a nicer man.

Claridge to leave Leicester

Steve Claridge, whose Wembley play-off goal took Leicester City into the Premiership two seasons ago, has made available for transfer after failing to win a regular place in the side this season.

The 31-year-old former Birmingham City and Cambridge United striker has seen his opportunities reduced since the signings of Tony Cottee and Graham Fenton. Claridge has had amicable talks with the Leicester manager, Martin O'Neill, who will now listen to offers.

"The manager and fans have been great to me and it will be a shame to leave," Claridge said. "However, I need regular first-team football and will consider any move."

O'Neill apparently ready to move for the former German international centre-half, Dictriam

Beiersdorfer. The 32-year-old flew in yesterday for talks about joining on a free transfer from the Italian side, Reggiana.

The club's chairman, Tom Smeaton, has promised to respond to O'Neill's demand for money to strengthen his squad. The club float on the Stock Exchange later this month and Smeaton said: "We're hoping to take in £1.2m and the money will go in all directions."

"Money for players has been my policy since I became chairman and I can assure Martin that nothing has changed. I've never given a set figure - but it will certainly be a substantial sum."

The recuperating England winger Steve Stone has signed a new four and a half year contract with the First Division leaders, Nottingham Forest.

Huddersfield opt for double act

Terry Yorath, the former Wales manager, yesterday revealed that he turned down the job of Huddersfield manager, preferring instead to be Town's new first-team coach.

The new manager is the untried and untested Peter Jackson, who up until the weekend was playing as a centre-back with the Vauxhall Conference club Halifax Town. But Halifax are to report Huddersfield to the Football Association over their approach to Jackson, which they say was illegal.

The two men, who will work without contracts, take over at the First Division's club from Brian Horton, who was sacked as manager on Monday along with his backroom staff.

Bryan Richardson, the Coventry chairman, has asked

the Football Association to show video evidence to referee Peter Jones, who sent off Dion Dublin at Blackburn 10 days ago.

Dublin was dismissed for violent conduct against Colin Hendry, but television pictures showed that there was no contact by the striker's arm. Hendry himself is apparently willing to speak on Dublin's behalf.

Walsall have escaped any action by the FA following two pitch invasions during their Coca-Cola Cup tie with Nottingham Forest at Bescot Stadium last month. A number of fans went onto the pitch to celebrate Andy Watson's winner in extra time and hundreds ran on again at the final whistle.

The Blackburn defender Gary Croft has signed a new four-year contract with the club.

Ryan Giggs is favourite to be named Wales' captain for their final World Cup qualifier in Belgium on Saturday, but it will only be a one-match appointment.

Gould needs to decide on a new captain because Gary Speed, who led the side for the first time in Turkey last month, is suspended. Mark Hughes, who would almost certainly have been next in line to lead his country, is also suspended.

If he is chosen, the Manchester United winger would become the second-youngest Welsh captain in history, after Mike England who was given the honour when he was 22.

Gould said: "I don't want to make any announcement just yet. I hear what is being said about Ryan, but we don't fly out to Belgium until Thursday and

we have a couple more training sessions before then."

The Republic of Ireland captain, Andy Townsend, has pulled out of the World Cup game against Romania on Saturday.

The 33-year-old Middlesbrough midfielder is to have a scan after a knee injury in the First Division game against Sheffield United on Sunday.

Tommy Wright and Danny Griffin are out of Northern Ireland's squad for Saturday's World Cup qualifier in Portugal.

Wright, the Manchester City goalkeeper, has suffered a recurrence of a persistent thigh strain. Griffin, the St Johnstone full-back, has an ankle problem. The manager, Bryan Hamilton, brings in Chester defender Ian Jenkins and the Blackburn gaffer Alan Fettis.

Giggs likely to lead Wales

After 17 days at sea, the leaders in the Whitbread Round the World Race are approaching half-way on the first leg to Cape Town, but, as Stuart Alexander explains, the weather still shows no sign of lending the fleet a helping hand.

A favourable wind remains a pipe dream for the 10-boat Whitbread fleet, with Grant Dalton in Merit Cup forecasting a long haul upwind while heading down the coast of South America.

"We have just received a long-range forecast which has made a couple of the guys question their desire to continue living," said Dalton yesterday, as Merit Cup was reaching towards the island of Fernando Noronha. "It's going to be hard on the wind after the island and on down to the next mark, the Ilha da Trindade off southern Brazil, and beyond."

The South Atlantic high is in the southern ocean, spinning south-east winds off the top of it, and it's forecast to stay there. This is not good."

Although Dalton's decision to switch direction early in the hope of finding a more favourable line to the Brazil-

ian coast paid off when he gained second place from Paul Cayard's EF Language, it has doubled the distance Dalton is behind the race leader, Knut Frostad, in Kvaerner.

The Norwegian, whose 48-mile advantage will take a lot of hard work to whittle down, was beating upwind into 15 to 20 knots and big waves. "The boat's taking a serious hammering," Frostad reported, "but seems to handle it well."

Also working upwind is the British entry Silk Cut, with Lawrie Smith having established a comfort zone in fourth place, 16 miles from Mark Fischer on Chessie Racing in fifth. However, the 158 miles by which Smith trails Frostad



Gloomy forecast leaves Merit Cup in depression

NATIONWIDE FOOTBALL LEAGUE	
FIRST DIVISION	
1 Preston v Crewe	2
2 Stockport v Bradford	1
3 Swindon v Bury	1
Playing Sunday: Birmingham v Wolves	
Stoke v Port Vale	
SECOND DIVISION	
4 Burnley v Carlisle	1
5 Chesterfield v Wigan	1
6 Fulham v Blackpool	1
7 Gillingham v Wycombe	1
8 Oldham v Nottingham	2
9 Middlesbrough v Bristol City	1
10 Preston v Bournemouth	1
11 Southend v Bradford City	1
12 York v Brentford	1
Also playing (not on coupons): Luton v Plymouth, Welsh v Wrexham	
THIRD DIVISION	
13 Chester v Brighton	1
14 Doncaster v Hartlepool	2
15 Hull v Scarborough	2
16 Leyton Orient v Rotherham	1
17 Lincoln v Torquay	1
18 Mansfield v Walsall	2
19 Notts County v Macclesfield	1
20 Peterborough v Colchester	1
21 Rochdale v Darlington	1
22 Shrewsbury v Barnet	1
Also playing (not on coupons): Cardiff v Scunthorpe, Exeter v Swindon	
GM VAUXHALL CONFERENCE	
23 Fleetwood v Morecambe	2
24 Hayes v Slough	1
25 Northwich v Nuneaton	1

is a big, though not impossible, challenge.

For the first time since they left the Solent on 21 September, the women's crew of EF Education, skippered by Christine Guillou, have moved off the bottom.

The last boat is now Brunel Sunergy, as Hans Bouscholle plays a cautious game after losing two feet off his rudder in a collision with a whale.

WHITEBREAD ROUND THE WORLD RACE TO CAPE TOWN: Latest position: 1 Frostad (Nor) 7,350 miles, Southampton to Capetown; 2 Merit Cup (GB) 3,738 miles to finish; 3 EF Language (Swe) 3,738 miles to finish; 4 Silk Cut (GB) 3,738 miles to finish; 5 Chessie Racing (USA) 3,738 miles to finish; 6 USF Fischer (USA) 3,738 miles to finish; 7 Toshiba (US) 3,738 miles to finish; 8 EF Education (Swe) 3,738 miles to finish; 9 C. Guillou (Fr) 3,738 miles to finish; 10 Brunel Sunergy (Neth) 3,738 miles to finish.

Ince the enforcer determined to play out his final summer in France

Paul Ince's experience of playing in Italy could prove hugely influential for England in Saturday's World Cup qualifier. Mike Rowbottom hears how 'The Guv'nor' hopes to rule in Rome.

Glenn Hoddle will not have it that the match against Italy represents the last chance for England players such as Paul Ince to sample what he refers to as the "crème de la crème" – the World Cup finals.

Gascoigne's change of focus sharpens England's sights

With three days to go to England's final World Cup qualifier in Rome, the spotlight is inevitably being turned on Paul Gascoigne. Will his return to Rome, where he played for Lazio, end in joy or tears?

Problems may await Gascoigne, but Glenn Hoddle, the national coach, believes he is bound for glory. Glenn Moore was at Bisham Abbey to hear him explain why.

According to the Italian press, if Paul Gascoigne returned to play for Lazio tomorrow they would sell 40,000 season tickets overnight. According to some of the English press, it is not only his former fans who are awaiting his return to Rome today – a photographer armed with a writ over an alleged assault and the Italian tax office also have a reputed interest from Gascoigne's Roman period.

Glenn Hoddle whose preparations have already been disrupted by Les Ferdinand's withdrawal with a recurrence of his stomach muscle injury, refused to discuss either matter yesterday, saying: "They are private." It is clear, however, that he is anxious that Gascoigne is not distracted.

In the past, the 30-year-old has had a habit of becoming over-hyped for key matches, notably the 1991 FA Cup Final which ended with him in hospital, and they do not get much bigger than a return to Rome for a World Cup qualifying decider.

England's coach pointed out the fact yesterday that Franco Baresi played in the last World Cup final for Italy at 36. "If you are good enough at 18 or 36 you have got a chance in my squad," he said.

Encouraging sentiments for Ince, who turns 30 on 21 October. But he is not wholly convinced. "For me and a few others this is probably the last chance of playing in the World Cup finals," he said. "It's a big, big game that I want to win."

"The Guv'nor", as he has come to be known in a career that has taken him from West Ham to Manchester United to

Internazionale to Liverpool, knows what it feels like to fail at this stage of the competition.

He was a member of the England side who missed qualifying for the 1994 finals when they lost 2-0 to the Netherlands in Rotterdam.

"It was a big disappointment to get beaten by Holland," he said. "But at the back of my mind I thought maybe I would be in the same situation in four years' time. And now here we are."

Ince's combative, assuring presence in front of the defence is likely to be one of the most influential factors in England carrying out Hoddle's stated

aim of settling to play as naturally as possible.

That will not be an easy proposition in front of a partisan 80,000 crowd, but the prospect does not face a player who has come through barages of Italian abuse – some of it racist – in his time.

His two years abroad was also sufficient for him to absorb the Italian way of footballing life, with all its smoothness and roughness.

"I know the Italian mentality," he said. "If they can stop a player like Gazza in our half rather than theirs, they will."

"When I was at Milan, the

coach, Ottavio Bianchi, said to me: 'If you don't get the ball, get the player – and do it further up their part of the field than ours.'

"He didn't mean take him out with two-footed tackle. Nothing malicious like that. Just something like blocking. The little tricks."

Ince knows his reception is likely to be predominantly hostile, but he faces the prospect with the easy confidence he demonstrated 11 days ago at Upton Park, when he laughed off the unrelenting boos and catcalls of a West Ham crowd still resentful at the manner of his departure eight years ago.

That confidence has been underpinned by experience. He was a success in Italy, where other Brits have failed. And he now has a more secure position in the national side than he had under the previous manager, Terry Venables, who dropped him for a year after Ince had pulled out of the Umbro Cup squad in the summer of 1995.

Although Ince fitted back into the national side, he found it more difficult when he returned from Inter to play for Liverpool this season.

"It took me quite a while to adjust to the pace," he said. "In Italy it's like, slow, slow, slow

then quick in the final quarter. In English football it's quick, quick, quick."

The pace of his life may be frenetic, but Ince is now steady-

ing himself before one of the highest hurdles in his career.

"We have got to go out and do the business Rome," he said. "We had a good chance against Holland. We had a chance against Germany in Euro 96. Now we have another chance – and I think we are stronger and better equipped this time."

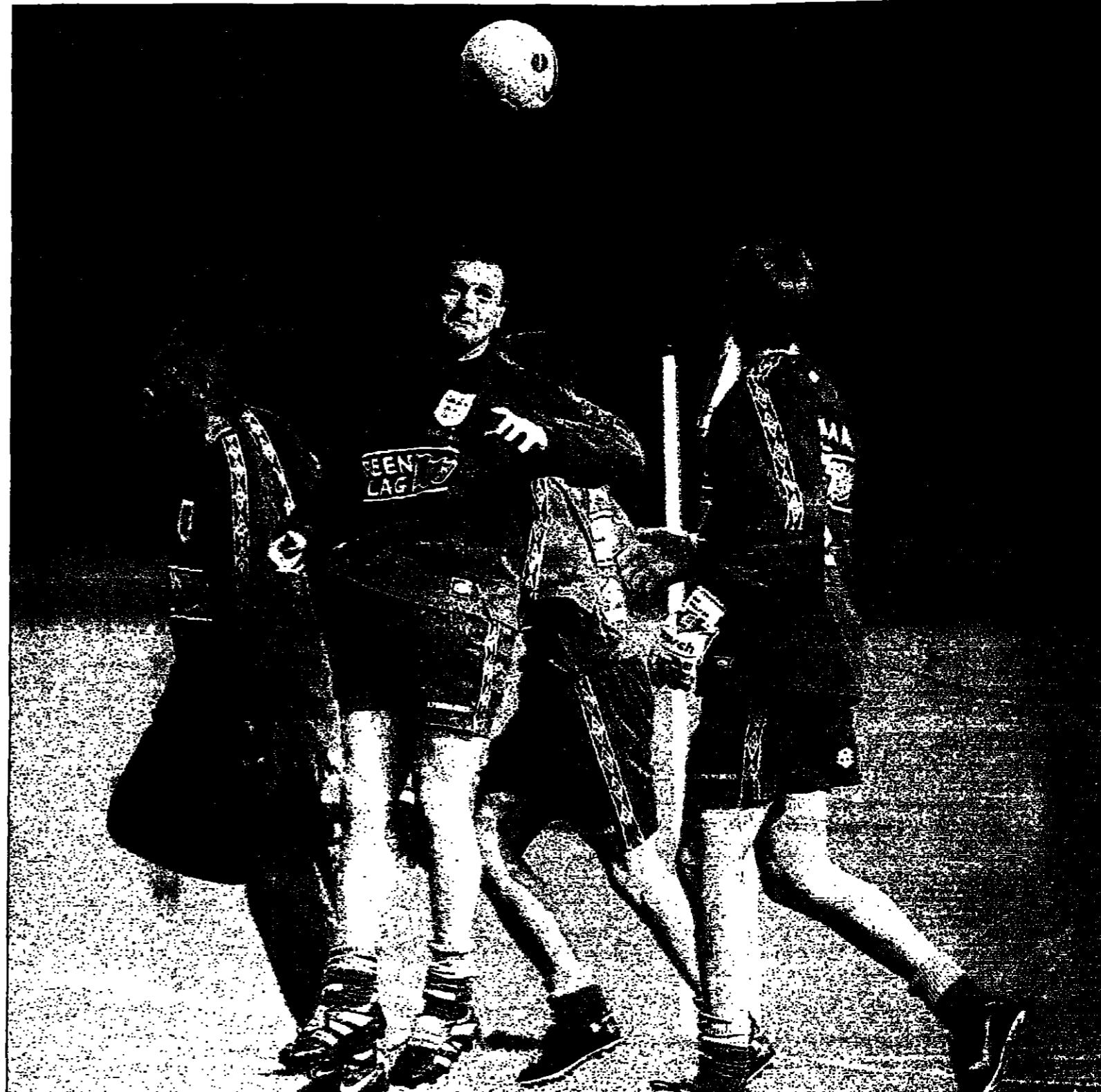
"When we beat Italy in the Tournoi, we had changed a lot of our squad but they were only



Ince: 'Saturday is a big, big game that I very much want to win'

missing Maldini; and we were comfortable.

"They got beat and they hurt them. You can't forget that. That will be in their minds and it will be in ours."



Air time: Paul Gascoigne heads for Rome during England training

Photograph: Peter Jay

Tottenham after a scan revealed further problems with his ongoing stomach injury.

The club will then decide whether he needs another op-

eration or further rest. "It's a blow," said Hoddle but, in truth, it is more of a blow to Gerry Francis, the Tottenham manager. Ferdinand does offer

England a different option, but he would only have started on the bench on Saturday. "I'm happy with what I've got," Hoddle said.

Altered state for Souness

Graeme Souness' three-month reign as manager of Torino ended yesterday, but he is staying on at the club to help in the Italian club's "strategic development", although what that role entails is unclear.

Massimo Vidulich, the Torino president, confirmed Souness' departure yesterday morning before announcing the appointment of the former Brescia manager Edoardo Reja.

Souness, who resigned as manager of Southampton in

May, said he remained committed to the Italian club and had taken on a different role. "When I accepted the position at Torino, I realised there was a very difficult role to be done," he said.

"The club had brought in 15 new players before I arrived. But, despite this, I was confident that, given sufficient time, I would achieve the sort of success that this great club and its supporters deserve. The board has now decided to pursue a new course. I remain committed to

the club and I have, therefore,

agreed with the board that I will

now take a wider role in strate-

gic development of Torino."

The tenuous nature of

Souness' new role has fuelled re-

ports that he could return to

Ibrox and link up with his for-

mer Rangers assistant, Walter

Smith, although this was denied

yesterday by the Rangers chair-

man, David Murray. Smith re-

placed Souness in 1991, when the

former Scotland captain moved

to Liverpool as manager.

CRICKET

China among targets for expansion plans

Australian and New Zealand cricket chiefs are to target China, Japan and other Asia-Pacific countries in an attempt to find new nations to play the sport.

The Australian Cricket Board's chief executive, Malcolm Speed, outlined the project at the launch of the new season Down Under at the Melbourne Cricket Ground yesterday.

"This is part of the International Cricket Council's push to make cricket a global game," he said. "We are looking at a number of potential

countries where we might seek to develop the game, and these include China and Japan, where the huge populations are a big attraction.

The first stage will be to get some professional development officers and coaches into countries to put infrastructures in place."

Australia's captain, Mark Taylor, used the occasion to appeal to the ACB to resist appointing separate captains for Tests and limited-overs games as he thinks the position should be regarded as "sacred".

Glamorgan, the county

champions, have been award-

a grant of £3.2m towards the

construction of a centre of

cricketing excellence at their

Sophia Gardens headquarters

in Cardiff.

The grant, more than dou-

ble the previous highest

amount awarded by the Sports

Lottery Foundation for Wales,

will pay for an indoor cricket

hall, comprising seven practice

nets with back-up equipment to

videotape players' perfor-

mances, and is part of a

planned £30m redevelopment.

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THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3424, Wednesday 8 October

By Aquila

Tuesday's Solution

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10				11				
12		13						
14	15		16	17				
18		19	20					
21	22		23					
24		25						
26								

ACROSS

- 1 Old Bill, according to Carroll? (6,7)
- 10 List tunes arranged for plucky musicians? (9)
- 11 Note angle of England's slow bowler? (5)
- 12 Short stop for a butterfly? (5)
- 13 Dire stage productions? (9)
- 14 Armstrong rested, with companion, on near side of moon? (7)
- 16 Italian banker in London street? (7)
- 18 Chop stick taking a cigar? (7)
- 20 One short summer month, new pier displays ornamental shrub? (7)
- 21 Volunteers in the second row? (4,5)

DOWN

- 23 Dysfunctional people are off these waders? (5)
- 24 Bellini's girl not entirely typical? (5)
- 25 Precipitation of constable, say, swimming? (8)
- 26 Laments shanty development in 9, for example? (6,2,5)
- 28 University fruit given name of one acting roundly? (9)
- 3 Redheads using some of this, then, naughtily? (5)
- 4 Dish to stir with love, possibly? (7)
- 5 Station everybody supports this month? (7)
- 6 Lothario who may have damsel in a frenzy? (6,3)
- 7 Violin heard in the morning at one? (5)

**AFTROPE APPALACHIA
BAR HILL SELFRIGHT EGUSLIT
CAI HIN UP EJECT TOPSECRETE
GARLAND STANDUPPING PARIS
GRIME PESTILENCE RILE
ODDITIES CHOPPE
TIGUM MHLR HEIR PRESUMPTION
ESENNA CRIETALYMPHO**

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